Sports / A25

Woods rules World Challenge

World / A10

Baghdad bomber kills 7 one year after Saddam capture

Lifestyle / E3

Underwater gardens need rescue

Metro / A22

'Acetylene Gang' busted; 21 suspects nabbed

Tanong ng Bayan / A18

Buwis sa yosi at alak, dapat bang taasan?

Win a 21" TV. Text 2910, watch INQ TV!

Credit downgrade Palace bogey–Joker

WAG TAYONG MAGPA-BOLA!

By Michael Lim Ubac

SAYING the "nation won't sink," Sen. Joker P. Arroyo yesterday accused Malacañang of foisting the bogey of a credit downgrade on the public

CREDIT/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Landslide buries village in Camarines Sur; 8 dead

By Jed Ll. Bacason and Michael Jaucian
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—Eight people were killed, seven others were injured and another was missing after a landslide buried a remote village in Camarines Sur at about 1 a.m. yesterday, the local Office of Civil Defense said.

LANDSLIDE/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Tuesday, December 14, 2004 ★★★★ 54 pages / 6 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 6 P18

website: www.inq7.net

'Da King' is dead

Fernando Poe Jr. united nation in prayer during two-day vigil for his recovery

FORMER Sen. Loren Legarda, Poe's running mate in the May presidential election, arrived at the hospital while the actor was still in critical condition, with her miraculous image of Our Lady of Manaoag. *(Story on Page A4.)* JOAN BONDOC

By Carlito Pablo, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Luige A. del Puerto

THE KING of Philippine movies Fernando Poe Jr., who nearly unseated President Macapagal-Arroyo in hotly contested polls this year, passed away about 12:15 a.m. today, family and friends confirmed.

Poe, 65, fell into a coma after a massive stroke late Saturday and never recovered, they said.

Family and friends, including his actress wife, Susan Roces, who had surrounded Poe since he was rushed to the St. Luke's Medical Center were seen weeping outside the intensive care unit.

Rep. Francis Escudero, a spokesperson for the political opposition, also confirmed his death. An official announcement was due later.

Poe's adopted daughter, Mary Grace Llamanzares, who rushed home from the United States to be with her father, did not make it to the hospital in time, having arrived at the airport at 11:30 p.m. Monday.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, son of Poe's bosom friend, deposed President Joseph Estrada, was seen rushing into the hospital just before midnight.

"*May nangyari* (Something happened)," he told an interviewer. "*Tinawag kami* (I was called)."

Two days after he slipped into the coma, Poe's condition turned for the worse yesterday and machines were helping him to hang on, Escudero said earlier yesterday.

Poe's family and friends were bracing for the worst.

"If last night FPJ was still able to breathe using his heart only, today (Monday), he needed to be assisted by medicines and machines in the hospital," Escudero said in a press conference. "Some of his organs were also affected

'DA KING'/ A8

ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER

FOLLOWERS of Fernando Poe Jr. hold a prayer vigil outside St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

Friends, fans, foes offer prayers for FPJ recovery

THE PRAYERS came from everywhere, from the presidential palace to the Catholic Church and the bleakest hovel.

A supporter from the Visayas of the gravely ill movie king Fernando Poe Jr., who lies comatose in the intensive care unit of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City, may have said it all.

"This is not about politics anymore, it is about saving a life," said Gil Arisola, chair of the FPJ Movement Bacolod. He said he hoped people would set aside politics and just pray for Poe's recovery.

Housewife Nenita Santillan, 58, was teary-eyed.

"I couldn't believe it. He was so strong," Santillan told the INQUIRER. "We have been praying for him since we heard the news. We're hoping he will survive this."

Had not a severe stroke brought him down on Saturday night, Poe might have been sharing the stage with President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Peninsula Hotel Manila last night. He and Ms

FRIENDS/ A8

GenSan bomb suspects tagged

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Several suspects in the bombing that left 14 people dead and 70 others wounded here Sunday have been identified but no arrests have been made, authorities said yesterday.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack in a public market in the city where both Moro and communist rebels operate.

National police chief Edgar Aglipay said investigators were looking into a dispute between two groups wrangling over a stall in the market, but added: "This is something we still have to prove. We are not discounting that other groups may have done this."

Army Col. Medardo Geslani said earlier that investigators had so far found "no direct link" to the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group, the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah, the communist New People's Army or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the country's main Moro separatist group.

"We have suspects but we can't divulge (their identities) right now," Geslani said. "We are validating leads, and maybe later today there will be something clearer."

Aglipay and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes

GENSAN/ A7

What happened to FPJ

Flavier says Poe recovery extremely hard

By Michael Lim Ubac

ONLY a miracle can save Fernando Poe Jr.

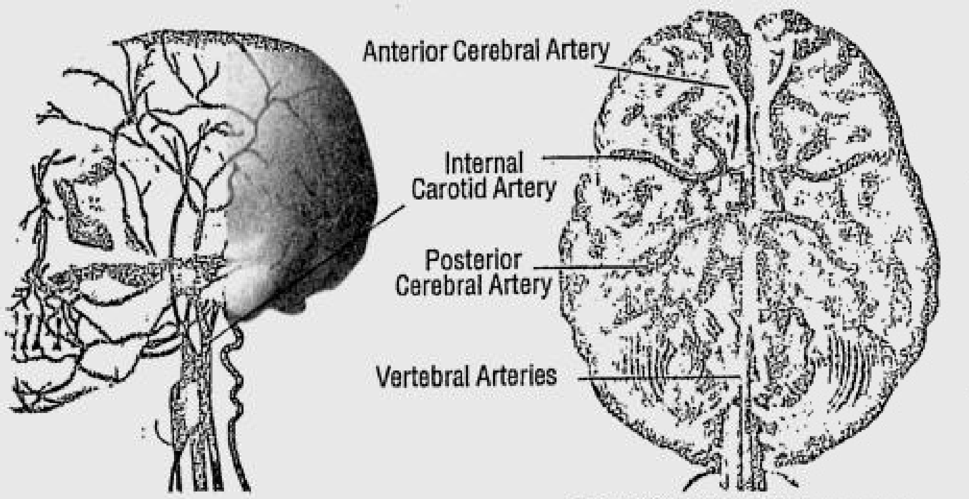
This was the assessment of Sen. Juan Flavier, a public health specialist who served as health secretary during the Ramos administration, when the INQUIRER yesterday showed him a copy of the latest medical bulletin issued by Dr. Abdias V. Aquino, Poe's attending neurologist.

Flavier said it would be extremely difficult for Poe to recover from his coma as the actor had suffered cerebral thrombosis and multiple organ failure.

"But it's hard to tell ... Let's hope for the best," said the senator, who found the medical bulletin "vague."

The medical bulletin, for instance, disclosed that Poe had "multiple organ system involvement." This, according to Flavier, was medical jargon for multiple organ failure.

FLAVIER/ A6



WORM'S EYE VIEW OF BRAIN

MEDICAL BULLETIN

"Mr. FPJ is presently confined at the Neuro-Intensive Care Unit for the past 36 hours. He suffered from a severe Brain Attack (stroke) secondary to multiple infarcts involving both the anterior and **posterior brain circulation** due to **occlusion** of blood vessels. He is still in coma and has **multiple organ system involvement.** His blood pressure is being supported by medicines. He is being managed by the St. Luke's Medical Center Stroke Service and other multi-disciplinary experts."

DR. ABDIAS V AQUINO
ATTENDING NEUROLOGIST
HEAD - STROKE SERVICE
INSTITUTE FOR NEUROSCIENCES
ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER

- **Multiple organ system involvement**: other vital organs such as the heart, lungs and kidney have also failed
- **Anterior brain circulation:** circulation of blood in the front part of the brain
- **Posterior brain circulation:** circulation of blood in the back part of the brain
- **Occlusion:** blocking

PDI Research / Sources: Dr. Joseph F. Smith Medical Library at http://www.chclibrary.org/micromed/00066710.html and Dr. Cathy Pineda

SCHOOL ON RADIO

Adult dropouts can try on-air learning

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

STILL dreaming of a high school diploma? Then listen to the radio.

The Department of Education has introduced on-air learning as an alternative means for out-of-school adults to get school credits.

Carolina Guerrero, director of DepEd's Bureau of Alternative Learning System, said learning modules designed for mothers who had not finished school would be broadcast over six provincial FM stations of Southern Broadcasting Network starting next month.

The department will pilot this radio-based instruction in six cities—Vigan, Laoag, Bacolod, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro and Davao.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad signed a memorandum of agreement with SBN chair Leonardo Dayao on Nov. 18.

On-air instruction is part of the DepEd's program for nonformal education.

Although it mostly concentrates on formal education, DepEd, through its bureau, conducts a basic literacy program for illiterate youth and adults.

It also offers an accreditation and equivalency program for those who had dropped out of school.

The DepEd offers learning programs comparable to formal elementary and high school education. These are delivered outside of the formal school setup to adults and youths who either have no access to a school, no time for school or simply have no means to attend school.

ADULT/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/12/14/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

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Int'l firm says reconstruction may spur RP growth in 2005

RECONSTRUCTION efforts after deadly storms which destroyed roads, bridges, shops and homes in the northern Philippines could significantly contribute to the country's growth next year, analysts said yesterday.

A report by international investment bank Bear Stearns said reconstruction costs, expected to run into billions of pesos, could spur investment in the devastated northern region and "significantly contribute to growth next year."

The four storms that struck the country over the past month left almost 1,800 dead or missing and caused about P4.6 billion in damage, the civil defense office said on Saturday.

Bear Stearns said the fact that Typhoon "Winnie" missed Manila when it struck the country on Dec. 2 meant that economic and financial damage was kept to a minimum despite the massive scale of human suffering.

"Most importantly, electronics factories in the Manila region that account for 90 percent of exports have not been severely affected, and larger amounts of workers' remittances will likely flow in to aid distressed relatives," the report said.

The Department of Agriculture has reported that damage to agriculture could exceed one billion pesos, while Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman has said as many as 13.6 million people were affected by the storms. *AFP*

SUFFER THE CHILDREN

12M Filipino kids in pain

By Christian V. Esguerra

POVERTY. Armed conflict. Sexually transmitted diseases.

These are the primary threats to the security of children in the Philippines and other developing countries, the United Nations Children's Fund reported yesterday.

"In the Philippines, as in the rest of the world, children are robbed of their childhood because of [these] three devastating factors," said Unicef representative Dr. Nicholas Alipui in a statement.

The Philippines alone has some 11.9 million children reeling from extreme poverty, Alipui told police officials during yesterday's launch of "The State of the World's Children in 2005."

Unicef is seeking the Philippine National Police's help to "prevent crimes against children, prosecute those who have victimized children, and handle cases involving children with sensitivity and regard for their youth."

"Clearly, the police force is part of the solution to providing a protective environment for all children in the Philippines, whether rich or poor," Alipui said.

According to the UN report, 24 percent of the world's least-developed countries suffered static, if not increased, under-five mortality between 1990 and 2003. The percentage was slightly lower for developing countries with 17.

Many least-developed countries—38 percent—also hosted major armed conflicts in the same period, compared to 27 percent among developing nations and only eight among developed countries.

In Mindanao, the government's all-out war against the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2000 drove thousands of children from their homes and schools.

AIDS was also prevalent among people aged between 15 and 49 last year in 20 percent of the least-developed countries, while 14 percent of developing countries and only 4 percent of developed nations registered a prevalence of the incurable disease.

Alipui said poverty was depriving Filipino children in poor communities access to health services, proper nutrition, quality education, and safe water and sanitation facilities.

An alarming reality is that these deprivations expose them to abuse, forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation and pornography, according to the official.

Worse, they lead the children to a host of criminal activities, he added.

The profile of a typical youth offender is nothing if not alarming: an elementary school dropout between 14 and 17 years old who hails from a poor family, the report said.

Thus, the idea is to encourage the PNP to "divert from jails to alternative programs" in dealing with youth offenders.

The PNP now has regular units—women's and children's desks—in police stations which specifically deal with the problems of women and the youth, be they offenders or victims.

FPJ poll protest hearing today may be canceled

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE PRESIDENTIAL Electoral Tribunal will "most likely" cancel the oral arguments scheduled for today in the electoral protest filed by actor Fernando Poe Jr. against President Macapagal-Arroyo, court officials said yesterday.

Lawyer Ismael Khan Jr., the tribunal's spokesperson, and Clerk of Court Luzviminda Puno said the PET would likely cancel the hearing set for 10 a.m. today after both Poe's and Ms Arroyo's lawyers had asked that it be rescheduled.

Khan said the cancellation would have nothing to do with Poe's current medical condition, noting that both parties filed their joint manifestation to cancel the hearing on Thursday. Poe suffered a stroke and was rushed to the hospital on Saturday night.

"In all likelihood, the hearing set for (today) would be canceled in view of the joint manifestation by both parties," Khan said.

"They had asked that it be reset to the first available date next year," Puno added.

Khan declined to say what would happen to Poe's electoral protest if he did not recover.

"It might not be proper for the court to comment on what may hypothetically happen," Khan said.

But he added that "everybody" at the court was praying for Poe's recovery.

The PET had scheduled for today the oral arguments on Ms Arroyo's "affirmative defenses" against Poe's allegations that she had cheated him of victory in the May 10 elections.

Poe had asked the tribunal on July 23 to declare him the winner of the last presidential election, alleging that Ms Arroyo's camp had tampered with election results in 128,893 precincts nationwide.

In her counter-protest, Ms Arroyo questioned the results from some 20,000 precincts where Poe allegedly cheated her.

She also questioned Poe's legal standing to file the protest since the Supreme Court had not categorically ruled that the actor was a natural-born Filipino citizen.

Ms Arroyo also asked the PET to dismiss Poe's protest since it was allegedly not sufficient in form and substance.

Thank You, Madame President

We, the undersigned organizations engaged in industry and agriculture, deeply appreciate your reactivation of the **National Anti-Smuggling Task Force** (NASTF), with DILG Secretary Angelo Reyes no less, as head. The government loses billions of pesos annually from outright and technical smuggling, which involves undervaluation, underdeclaration, misdeclaration and misclassification of imports. These huge revenue losses, without doubt, contribute immensely to our current fiscal difficulties.

Curbing smuggling levels the playing field for Philippine business, industry and agriculture, substantially ensures their viability, protects the jobs of workers and helps create a climate of stability.

In the new NASTF, a formidable force is now ranged against smuggling. For one, the Task Force has broader capabilities as Secretary Reyes, in his capacity as DILG head, will have the local government units, especially the coastline barangays, and the police, to assist in the campaign.

We also wish to thank Senators Mar Roxas, Juan Ponce Enrile, Richard Gordon, Alfredo Lim and Ramon Magsaysay, Jr., for supporting our call to reactivate the NASTF through the Senate Resolution they sponsored and all the other Senators who helped towards achieving our goals:

Madame President, we support you in your fight against graft and corruption and all forms of criminality. By reactivating the NASTF, you have emplaced a vital cornerstone in the edifice of the Strong Republic.

Thank you, Madame President.

JESUS L. ARRANZA
President
Federation of Philippine Industries

SERGIO ORTIZ LUIS
President
Philippine Exporters Confederation

DONALD G. DEE
Executive Vice-President
Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry

FRANCIS C. CHUA
President
Philippine Chamber of Commerce Foundation

ROBIN C. SY
President
Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry

WIGBERTO E. TAÑADA
Lead Convenor
Fair Trade Alliance

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ
National Coordinator
Alyansa Agrikultura

MIGUEL B. VARELA
President
Philippines, Inc.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Sandigan sequesters more Garcia assets

By Volt Contreras, *Manila*
and Nestor P. Burgos Jr., *PDI Visayas Bureau*

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has included a school for caregivers, agricultural lands and a high-end vehicle found in Iloilo and Guimaras among the assets it had sequestered belonging to Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia (ret.) and his family in connection with the hidden wealth case against him.

Chief sheriff Ed Urieta said the antigraft court was also looking for Garcia's deposits in at least 18 banks in Iloilo, the general's home province.

Among the assets seized were the IJT International Caregiver Center Inc. in Jaro, Iloilo City; the Kanumayan Resort in Dumangas, Iloilo; parcels of agricultural land in Guimaras province, and a Honda CRV, Urieta told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The vehicle was found without license plates in a repair shop on Delgado Street, Iloilo City, and was taken to Manila for impounding, Urieta said in a phone interview.

Charged both in the Sandiganbayan and a military court, Garcia is accused of amassing P143 million in unexplained wealth.

The sequestered resort, reportedly valued at P9 million, is covered by four separate land titles, while the agricultural estates are covered by two titles, Uriera said.

The registers of deeds in the two provinces had been asked to annotate the court's seizure of the properties pending Garcia's trial, he said.

In a three-page notice of levy upon real property, Urieta notified the register of deeds of Iloilo that properties of Garcia, his wife Clarita and sons Ian Carl, 26; Juan Paulo, 23; and Timothy Mark, 21, had been placed under the court's control.

Garcia is also facing four charges of perjury filed by the Ombudsman for his failure to declare his cash and properties in his statements of assets, liabilities and net worth from 1993 to 2003. He is also facing court-martial.

The sheriff also went to the city register of deeds to inquire about the Garcia residence located at 46-H Locsin Subdivision in Jaro District, said lawyer Angelo Geremias, regional registrar.

The two-story house is registered to Clarita's father, Quillon Depakakibo, and has a market value of P550,020, according to records at the city assessor's office.

Garcia, his wife and three sons have more than P18 million worth of property in Iloilo and Guimaras provinces, according to records at the register of deeds and assessor's office of Iloilo.

The school and resort, which Garcia and his wife claimed were among their sources of income after the general was investigated for unexplained wealth, were losing money, according to audited financial statements submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

But the family of Clarita denied that the properties in Dumangas had been acquired with ill-gotten wealth.

Clarita's father and brother, Feneno, said earlier the properties were acquired with capital put up by their family.

DOH opens hi-tech facility for highly contagious diseases

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT of Health yesterday opened the first state-owned technologically advanced isolation facility for highly contagious and infectious diseases like the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The P19-million facility at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine in Muntinlupa City was inaugurated in the wake of the outbreak in the country of meningococcemia, yet another respiratory ailment that killed three people in Metro Manila and 12 in Baguio City in the last two months.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the facility could also be used to isolate and observe patients with bird flu, influenza, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis and other highly infectious respiratory ailments.

"This facility will not only provide isolation rooms for SARS patients but will also ensure adequate protection for our health workers… All these make a strong foundation for us in being prepared, not only for SARS, but other emerging and reemerging infections," Dayrit said.

The facility can accommodate eight to 10 patients in six negative pressure rooms and an intensive care unit.

A negative pressure room, which is common in developed countries like Singapore, has an air-handling system that filters the air circulating in the room. The filters prevent germs from spreading.

Besides the pricey private hospitals, only RITM has negative pressure isolation rooms. Each room costs P3,000 per day, RITM director Remigio Olveda said during a tour of the facility yesterday.

Olveda said the RITM would also open the isolation facility to indigent patients free of charge.

The facility was built with the P15-million standby SARS fund set aside by President Macapagal-Arroyo last year, P5 million from the World Health Organization and P4 million from the Japanese government.

The SARS facility was inaugurated by Dayrit, Olveda, WHO country representative Jean Marc Olive and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office chair Sergio Valencia.

SARS infected 14 Filipinos, killing two of them, last year.

4 hurt in small plane crash

FOUR people were injured yesterday when a small private plane crashed at an airstrip in Pulilan, Bulacan, aviation police said.

The Cessna twin-engine plane crashed shortly after takeoff with a pilot and three passengers on board, said Col. Rizalino Roxas of the aviation security group.

The plane was destroyed and the extent of the injuries of the four was not known, Roxas said. *AFP*

Malacañang cancels Christmas parties

MALACAÑANG and all its attached agencies have decided to forgo their annual Christmas celebrations and use the money to shore up donations for typhoon victims.

In an interview with RMN radio, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said this was the recommendation of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to President Macapagal-Arroyo, who approved the offer.

"We reached this decision as early as last week when the employees themselves suggested not to hold any more lavish Christmas parties," Bunye said.

Malacañang is the latest government and private agency to skip the annual Yuletide parties. *Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

Leksell Gamma Knife

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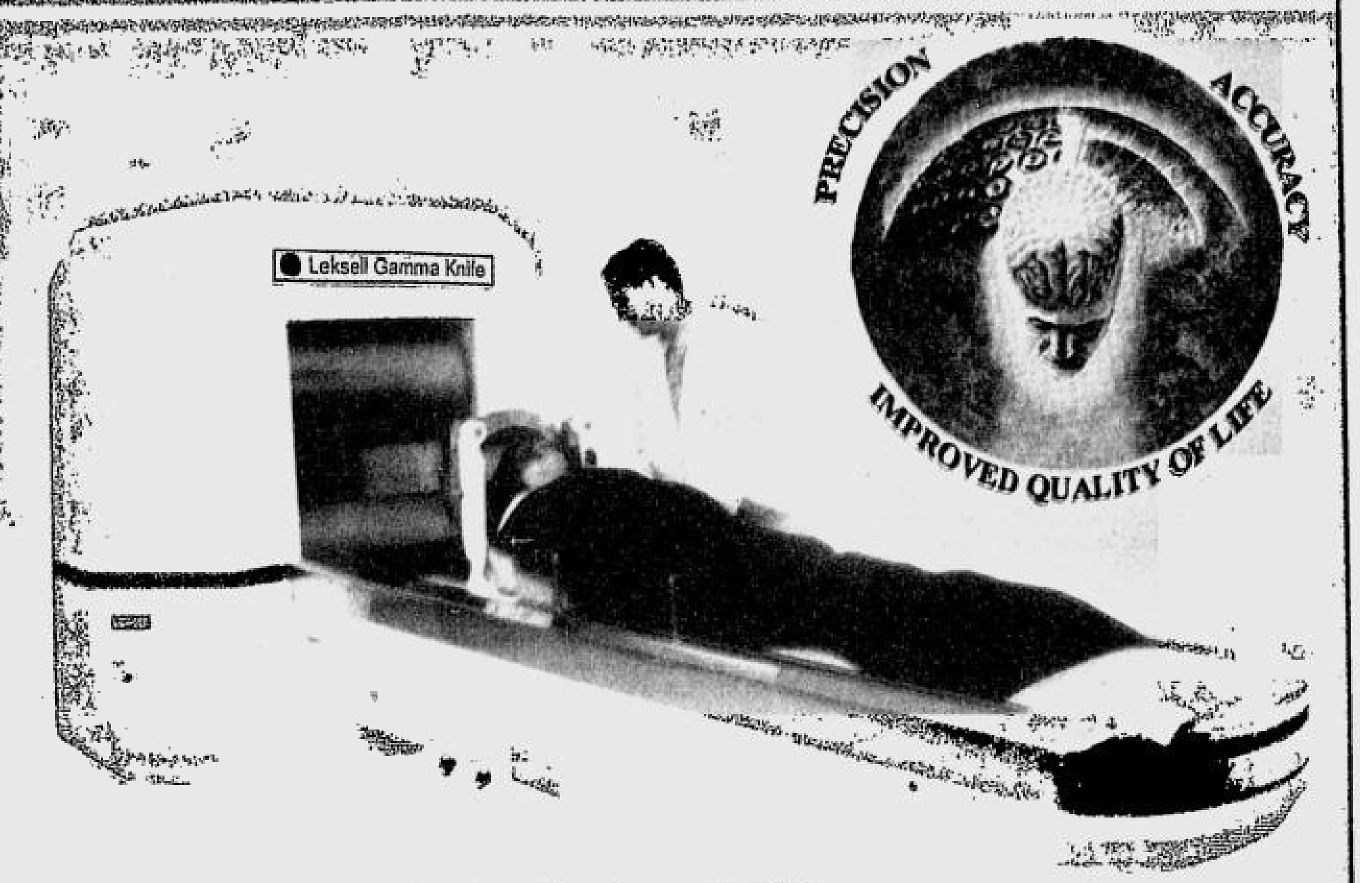
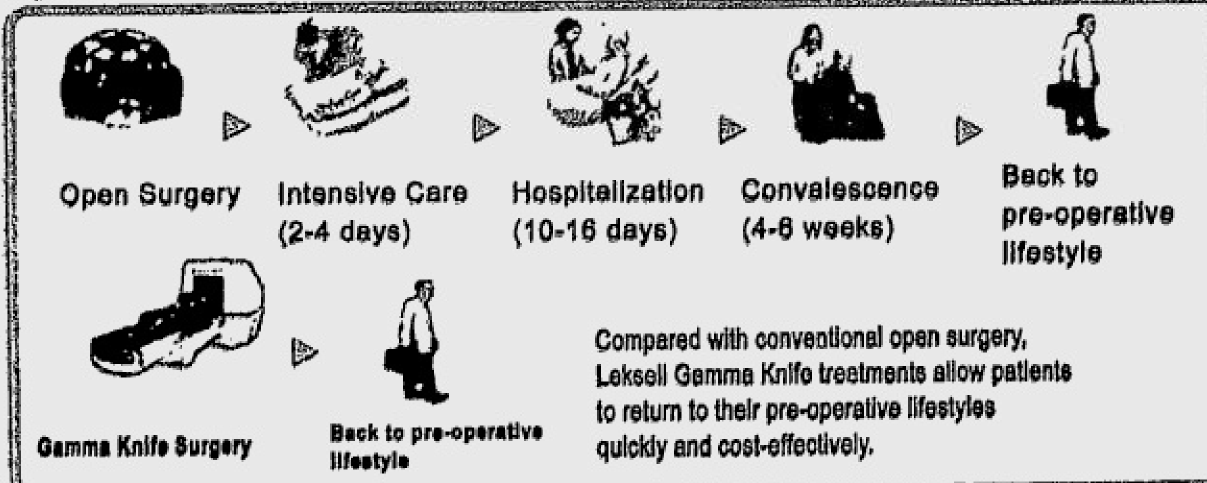
- Patients with residual lesions left unresected by previous open neurosurgical procedures
- Patients undergoing conventional radiotherapy, needing boost dose
- Patients with recurrent tumors
- Patients at high risk for surgical complications due to age or underlying medical problems
- Patients who refuse open craniotomy
- Patients with functional problems like ***Tic Doloreaux, Epilepsy, Parkinsonism, Intractable pain***



A COMPARATIVE COST-BENEFIT ILLUSTRATION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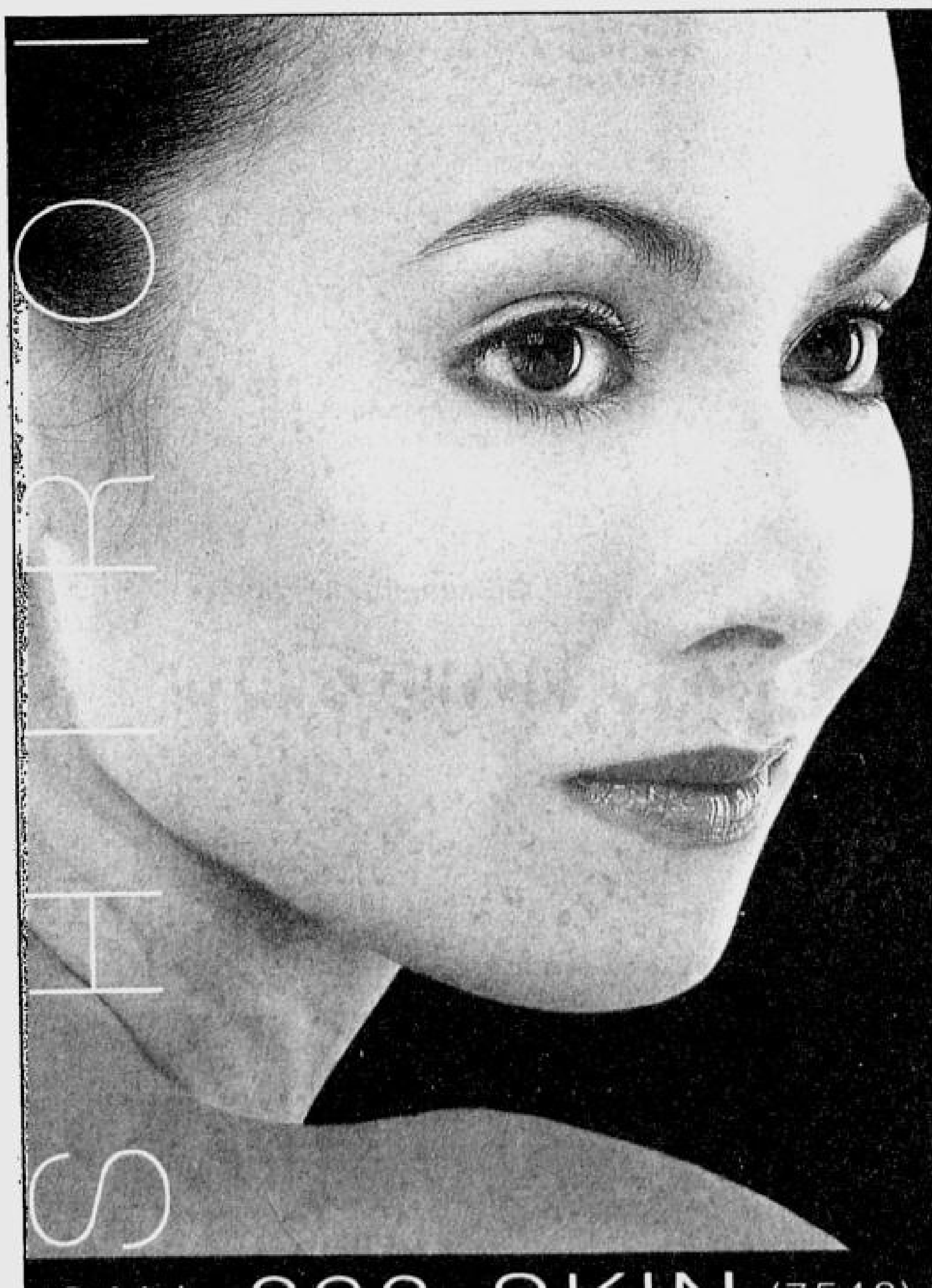

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Sadly, Poe family reunion came early

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 14, 2004
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13
Gospel: Mt 21:28-32

Jesus went on to say, "What do you think of this? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said to him: 'Son, today go and work in my vineyard.' And the son answered: 'I don't want to.' But later he thought better of it and went. Then the father went to the second and gave him the same command. This son replied: 'I will go, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what the father wanted?" They answered, "The first." And Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you: the publicans and the prostitutes are ahead of you on the way to the kingdom of heaven. For John came to show you the way of goodness but you did not believe him, yet the publicans and the prostitutes did. You were witnesses of this, but you neither repented nor believed him."

Commentary

"No" comes easy. It's always there, ready to come out. When I say "No" I feel I really exist: I'm set off against you, against what's happening, against just about everything. Many reactions—hate, anger, fear—distil down to No. The ego itself is made of No. Small children at a certain stage take to saying No; it's their first assertion of the self, the beginning of their independence. It's a recoil, a turning in; somehow they look smaller when they are saying No. Every one of us indeed: I become a small hard ball when I say No. (I'm not denying that there are times to say No; I'm talking only about that reactionary No.)

Then there's something worse than No. There's a pretended Yes. No goes so far that it can't live with itself any more, and it becomes capable of turning into a real Yes. But a pretended Yes only blocks the path. A nominal believer is in a worse position than an unbeliever.

When you say a real Yes you are moving towards people, towards God, towards things; you are expanding. This may sound too easy, but there is nothing easy about Yes.

I thank You God for most this amazing day:
for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes (E.E. Cummings)

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

By Christine O. Avendaño

"DA KING" of Philippine movies, with his Queen, flashes the No. 1 sign during happier times, just before the May presidential campaign.

PDI PHOTO

THE FAMILY reunion had been set for Dec. 22 but it came ahead of schedule—its members brought together by sadness—and fear.

As they arrived one after the other, they gathered at St. Luke's Medical Center to keep vigil over the most beloved of them all, the gravely ill Fernando Poe Jr.

Poe's wife, actress Susan Roces, looked tired, and relatives and friends tried to coax her to eat. But she did not want to, said Rep. Imee Marcos, who had come to visit.

Also at the hospital were Poe's sisters, Elizabeth and Jenny, along with other family members.

Poe's daughter, Mary Grace, is expected to arrive today from the United States, where she is taking her master's degree.

Despite news of Poe's deteriorating condition, his friends cling to hopes of a miracle.

Film director Herminio "Butch" Bautista, who came with actor Berting Labra, said they came "because something might happen and we might not see him alive again."

Poe's vice presidential running mate, former Sen. Loren Legarda, arrived clasping an image of the Lady of Manaoag, a miracle worker, to many Filipinos.

Legarda told reporters the image was given to her by her former chief of staff in the Senate.

"I'm giving the Lady to FPJ and Tita Susan so that they could be given a miracle," Legarda said.

Before she left the intensive care unit, Legarda said she went to Poe and loudly told him: "We love you. You have many supporters here."

She said she raised her voice because the doctors had told her that even if Poe was in a coma, he could still hear them.

Legarda said Roces asked her to bring the image to Poe's bedside table. Together, they "prayed over" the unconscious actor.

"It's very touching ... In my whole lifetime I never thought I would be praying over FPJ that way," she said, teary-eyed.

It was only some time ago, Legarda said, that she learned of how Poe had helped countless people.

She said that former actor Ramon Zamora told her that Poe had built him a house in Antipolo.

Zamora cried when he told Legarda that recently, Poe also bought him 10 kilos of *longanisa* and gave him P10,000 in cash.

Poe had also been paying for the hospital bills of fellow actor Paquito Diaz.

"He does things quietly," Legarda said.

Landslide buries village in Camarines Sur; 7 dead

From page A1

After four cyclones ravaged Camarines Sur weeks ago, a landslide occurred in Zone 3, Barangay Bulao in Tinambac town, OCD regional director Arnel Capili said.

"The report we got is that the landslide buried five houses," Capili said, adding that rescue teams and ambulances were sent to the area, and a backhoe had cleared the road.

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council in Camarines Sur identified the fatalities as Andelo Amabello, 22; Francisco Amabello Jr., 16; Emma Parro, 19, and Arnel, 39; Veronica, 37; Joven, 15; Franco, 12, and Jason, 5—all surnamed Segovia.

It was not immediately known if the Segovias belonged to one family.

Injured were Francisco Amabello Sr., 65; Josefina de la Torre, 52; Luis Segovia, 17; Ariel Segovia, 13; Ivy Segovia, 9; Ryan Segovia, 3, and Ronal Segovia, 1.

Still missing is Lea Aldia.

Brig. Gen. Ricardo Nobleza, commanding general of the 9th Infantry Division stationed in Pili, Camarines Sur, immediately sent three platoons of rescuers under Lt. Col. Nilo Perfecto to the landslide site to rescue the victims and retrieve the bodies still buried under the mud.

One medical team was under Col. Arnulfo Ilanan and another team with an ambulance was under Maj. Roel Landicho, a military doctor.

The landslide hit the coastal town of Tinambac after days of heavy rains, brought by back-to-back typhoons, loosened the earth, according to the municipal police chief Insp. Amado Montana.

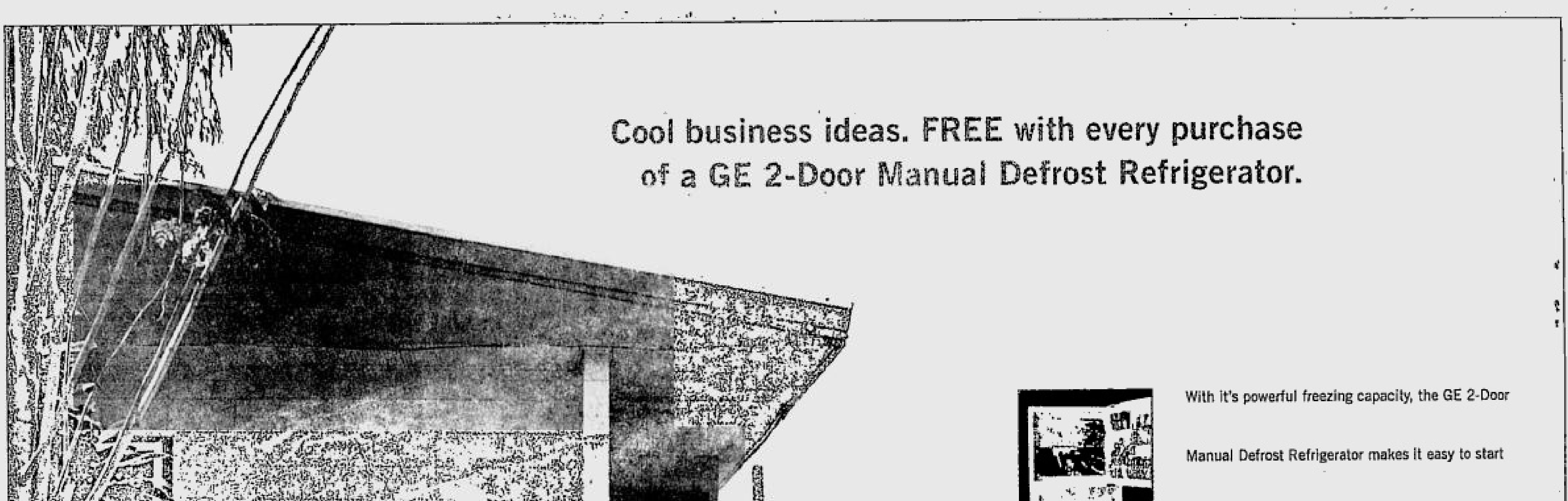
It toppled power pylons past midnight, knocking out electricity in the area. It also buried a portion of the provincial road, hampering rescue work, Montana added.

Camarines Sur Gov. Elray Villafuerte asked the national government to dispatch equipment to be used in clearing the road.

Widespread floods and landslides unleashed by two storms left about 1,600 people dead or missing in the Philippines two weeks ago.

Camarines Sur was hardest hit by the devastating storms on Nov. 29 and Dec. 2. At least 893 people were killed and 480 were missing, officials said.

More than 2.3 million people were affected by the storms, which also caused about P3.8 billion in damage, according to the OCD. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra in Manila, AP and AFP*



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NPAs warn US troops: You're dangerously close

Limit role to humanitarian assistance or face attacks, says Ka Roger

COMMUNIST guerrillas yesterday warned US troops taking part in relief work for tens of thousands of victims of storms to limit their role to humanitarian aid or face attacks.

More than 600 troops from US bases in the region arrived in the Philippines over the past week "to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief for people who were affected by severe storms," a US Embassy statement said.

Restraint

It said the Philippine military would provide "helicopter landing zone safety" for the US mission, which would operate in areas under leftist influence.

New People's Army (NPA) spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said the guerrillas would refrain from attacking foreign soldiers engaged in relief work after a series of typhoons and storms left 1,600 people dead or missing in the Philippines.

The rebels earned the public's ire on Nov. 30 when they ambushed what the Filipino military described as an armed forces humanitarian mission to help victims of the storms.

The attack left 10 soldiers dead.

Combat patrol

The NPA alleged that the slain Filipino soldiers were on a combat mission and thus were legitimate targets.

It has been waging a 35-year Maoist campaign to topple the government, which it claims is a puppet of the United States, the former colonial power.

"It would be wise for American troops to refrain from undertaking military operations in the area including intelligence-related activities," Rosal said in a statement to news agencies.

Leave immediately

"They are dangerously close to NPA guerrilla zones, and it would be prudent for them to confine themselves to areas where actual relief operations are underway in order to avoid unnecessary encounters."

He urged US troops to leave after completing their mission, which the American Embassy said would focus on the towns of General Nakar, Infanta and Real towns in Quezon province.

NPA relief work

Rosal said NPA units in the area would also refocus their activities toward "socio-economic work, which includes assisting victims in guerrilla zones in production and in the rebuilding of their homes and water systems."

The US task force on the relief mission will "provide immediate lifesaving support to the flood devastated areas of the Philippines," said its operations officer Lt. Col. Gregory Bond. *AFP*

Rebels release workers they seized in South

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Communist rebels kidnapped 14 people working on a government infrastructure project in South Cotabato province last week, but freed them a day later when troops caught up with them, the military said yesterday.

New People's Army (NPA) rebels torched bulldozers and other equipment during the raid Thursday on the construction site in Santo Niño town before seizing the workers, the military said.

"All the hostages were released and they are all safe. Troops are pursuing the rebels," said local Army commander Brig. Gen. Alexander Yapching.

The attack apparently came after a failed extortion attempt, he said, without elaborating.

The 8,000-member NPA is the armed unit of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Government peace talks with the group have been suspended. *AFP*

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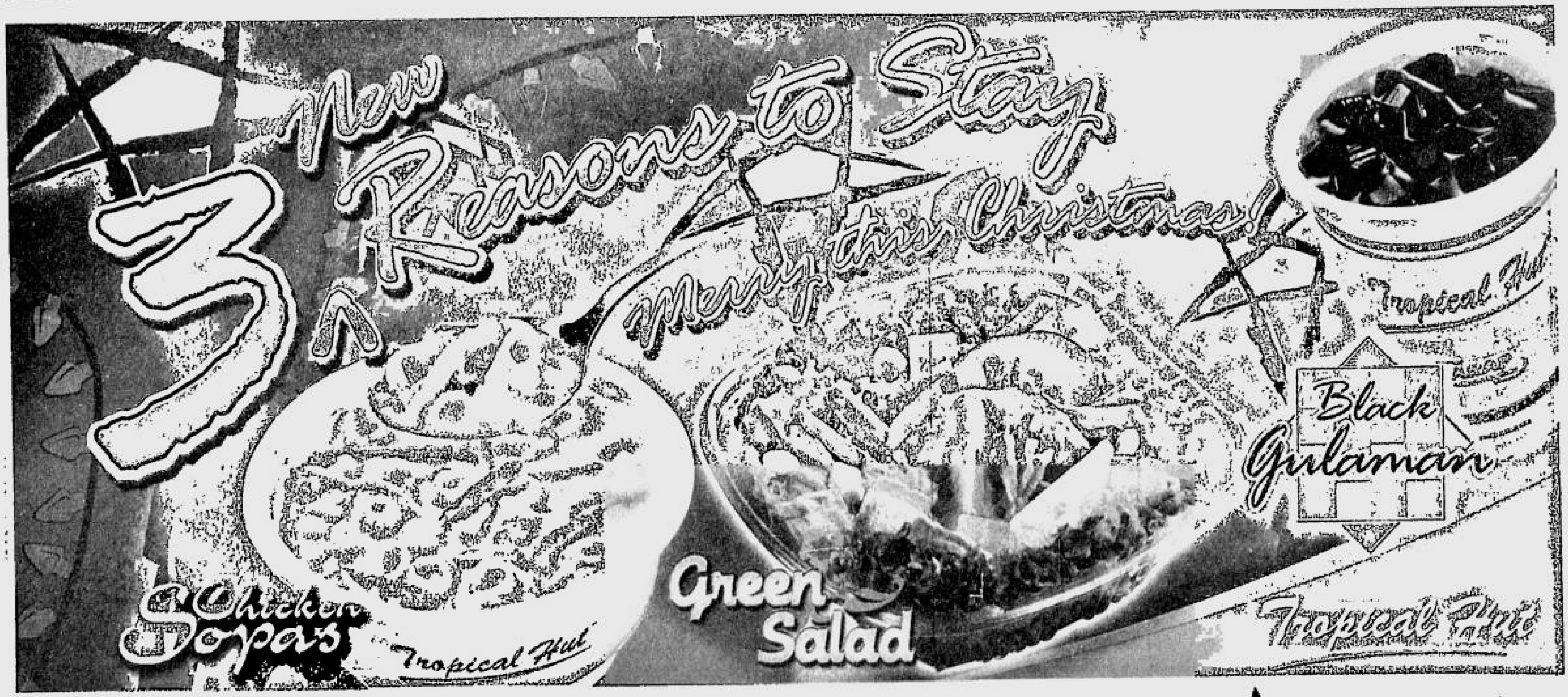

Flavier says Poe recovery extremely hard

From page A1

"[But] it doesn't say what organ," he said.

Flavier said cerebral thrombosis referred to the formation of a clot (clog) in the coronary arteries, impeding the delivery of blood to parts of the brain that control different functions, organs and tissues of the body.

Like all organs and tissues, the brain needs a constant and immediate supply of oxygen contained in the blood. As a result of thrombosis, oxygenated blood stops flowing into the brain and cells begin to die rapidly. Other body organs—like the kidneys, liver and lungs—that are controlled by these parts of the brain cease to function.

"I heard that the parts of the brain affected (by thrombosis) are increasing ... so the more serious it becomes, the harder to recover," Flavier explained.

"When it affects the part of the brain controlling leg movement, your legs become paralyzed," he said. "But I heard that it had already spread, so more parts of the brain are being affected. The recovery is more difficult (in this case). You cannot conduct a medical operation on the brain if there are too many thrombosis."

He said "severe brain attack (stroke) secondary to multiple infarcts involving both the anterior and posterior brain" simply meant that several parts of the brain had a stroke.

An infarct means that tissues of a particular organ of the body are either dead or dying.

"Due to occlusion of blood vessels" means there are obstructions in blood vessels causing a stroke, according to him. "So there was a lack in oxygen supply to the brain, hindering normal body functions."

According to medical books, the damage to different areas of the brain becomes irreversible 15 to 30 minutes from the onset of oxygen deprivation. If the obstruction in the blood vessel is not relieved, the area of the brain affected dies by infarction.

Flavier said there had been some patients afflicted by cerebral thrombosis who recovered. "But it depends if the case is not severe. But this (Poe's condition) is a multiple case," he said.

IN THE KNOW

What is a stroke?

Stroke is a disease that affects blood vessels supplying oxygen and nutrients to the brain. It occurs when a vessel bursts or is clogged by a blood clot or other particles.

Symptoms of a stroke include blurring or decreased vision in one or both eyes, severe headaches, weakness, numbness, or paralysis of the face, arm or leg that is usually confined to one side of the body, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination.

The effects depend on the stroke's severity. These include sudden change in behavioral style, memory loss, speech or language problems, vision problems and paralysis.

Severe cases can lead to a coma or a deep and usually prolonged unconsciousness where the patient is unable to respond to external stimuli. A medical website (Postgraduate Medicine Online) said stroke was among the "Big Three" causes of coma; the other two are head (cranial) trauma and drug overdose.

Most vulnerable to stroke are people who are obese, have high cholesterol level or high red blood cell count, cigarette smokers (especially if combined with oral contraceptives), have little physical activity, consume alcoholic drinks above two drinks per day, or use cocaine or intravenous drugs.

PDI Research

SOURCES: DR. JOSEPH F SMITH MEDICAL LIBRARY AT HTTP://WWW.CHCLIBRARY.ORG/MICROMED/00066710.HTML AND DR. CATHY PINEDA

Corrections

IN THE DEC. 7 issue, a caption misstated the team in the bottom photograph appearing on Page D4 of the Lifestyle section. In the photograph was the Ateneo de Manila University women's badminton team—not the De la Salle University intercollegiate champion team.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 9 issue, a Special Project article on Page B8—"Hope empowers Visayas"—erroneously identified Juan Miguel del Gallego as the chair of the Visayas regional operations of Philippine Business for Social Progress. Del Gallego is the former chair while John Domingo is the current one.

IN THE DEC. 10 issue, a photo caption in Maurice Arcache's column, "Without Batting an Eyelash," on Page I1 of the Lifestyle section inadvertently identified Jojo Tongco (left) as the president of Nestlé Philippines. Salvador Pigem (second from left) is the company president.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 13 issue, the banner story of the front page—"FPJ in coma; next 72 hours crucial"—misstated the name of Fernando Poe Jr.'s attending physician. The doctor is Abdias—not Anastacio—Aquino. The same story also misstated the source of the information that the actor had been placed on life support. The information was supplied by movie talent and Poe's friend Josie Tagle—not by Poe's assistant Susan Tagle.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Adult dropouts can try ...

From page A1

This would be the first time the DepEd would use the media to teach out-of-school adults.

Under the setup, 25 mothers who did not finish school would be selected from each city.

From their homes, they would listen to SBN-FM radio for lessons aired every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Repeat broadcasts are from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. of the same days.

The special broadcast will start in December and end in May next year.

Chat on air

The learning modules would both be formative and interactive, meaning the learners can chat on air with the instructor, according to the DepEd.

After six months, the DepEd would evaluate the mothers enrolled in the program to check if they acquired the equivalent skills required in basic education.

If the program is successful, the DepEd said it would institutionalize radio-based instruction.

Under the MOA, SBN also agreed to give hiring priority to those who would complete the DepEd program.

"The traditional view of delivering education is only through the school system. But with the BALS around, there exists a flexibility in both educational systems that enable a learner to seek and avail of entry and reentry opportunities in both streams," Guerrero said.

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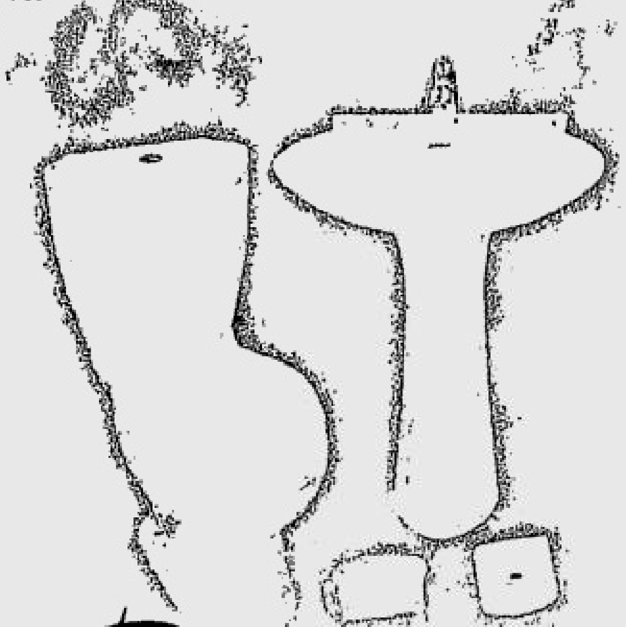

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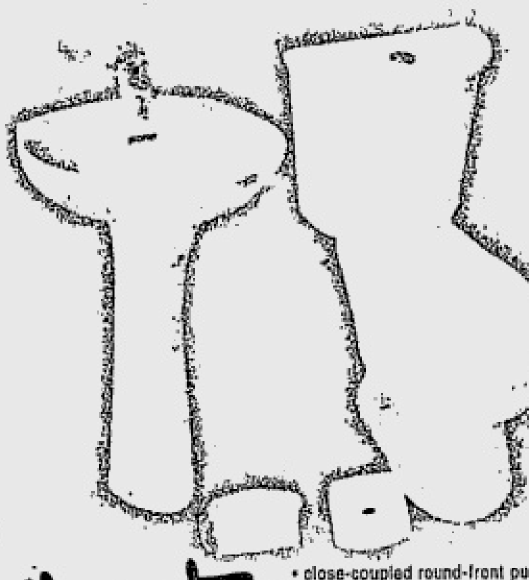

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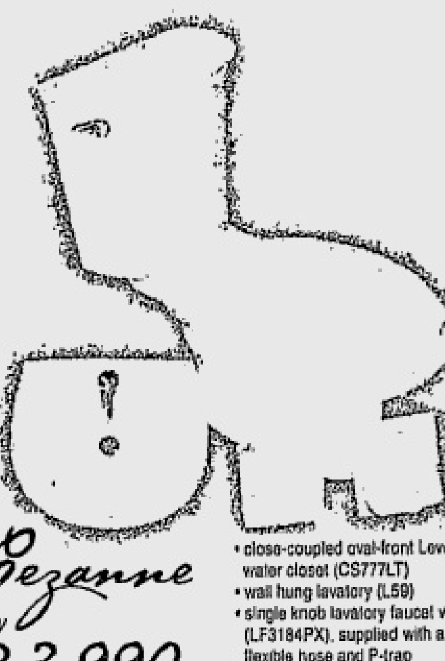

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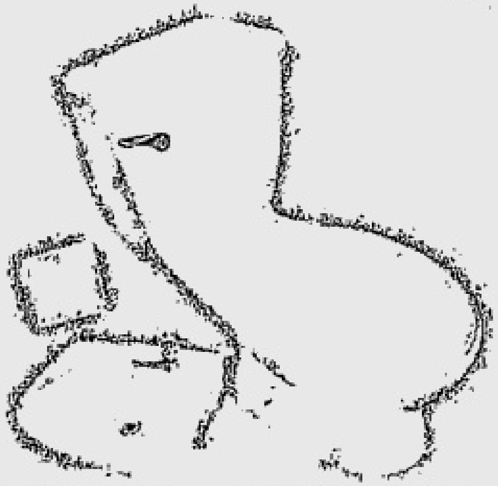

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GenSan bomb suspects tagged

From page A1

flew to this city to assess the damage of the explosion and to oversee the investigation.

Sketch of suspect

Reyes revealed that local authorities had already made a sketch of the suspect based on the description given by a female witness who was reportedly standing closest to Stall No. 82 of the meat section where the bomb exploded.

Reyes said the witness had told police that at around 3:45 p.m. Sunday, a man in his late 20s, about 5'3" in height, fair complexion and wearing a cap, bought a kilo of meat. After that, the man reportedly asked permission from the witness to leave his bag containing eggs and the meat.

Several minutes later, the explosion happened, killing three people on the spot and wounding several others.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said the city government would foot the hospital bills of the blast victims.

Boxing featherweight sensation Manny Pacquiao, fresh from his fight against a Thai foe, promised to share part of his winnings with the bomb victims.

Before his convincing KO victory over Fahsan 3K Battery on Saturday, the Filipino boxing hero vowed to use his purse to alleviate the plight of flood victims in Luzon. "Surely, I will help my own *kababayan* out there," Pacquiao, a native of General Santos, said in Filipino.

President Macapagal-Arroyo promised a swift investigation of Sunday's "heinous deed."

The military and police have been placed on red alert following the bombing.

Soldiers and policemen have secured vital installations and densely populated areas, such as schools, markets and churches nationwide to prevent another bomb attack.

"The red alert status was declared in anticipation of any contingency situation that may arise as a result of the bombing," Brig. Gen. Alexander Yano, military spokesperson, said at a press conference.

A joint police and military investigating team is looking into the possibility that the attack was the work of the Abu Sayyaf or a lost command of the MILF.

Military intelligence sources said they were looking into the possible involvement of an MILF faction, whose leader Jack Andatuan was killed in a clash with security forces in Banga, South Cotabato, eight days ago.

"It (the blast) could also be part of an MILF bombing plan set before and after Ramadan," sources said, referring to the Muslim holy month that ended Nov. 15.

The government is seeking to start peace talks with the MILF after signing a ceasefire with the 12,000-member guerrilla force two years ago.

However, MILF officials have so far failed to show up at the negotiating table amid an apparent power struggle following the death from natural causes last year of its leader Salamat Hashim, who founded the movement in 1978.

In Cotabato City, MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said his group was not involved in the blast.

Kabalu said he had talked with MILF Commander Aguilar, whose area of operation covers General Santos.

"In whatever capacity, our task is to be able to help the government at this time that it is negotiating peace with us. Any involvement to such atrocity would mean violating the 2002 ceasefire agreement that we have entered into with the government," Kabalu said.

The MILF spokesperson presented other probable angles: Political sabotage and retaliation by followers of Andatuan who was killed by police. *With reports from AP, AFP, Christian V. Esguerra and Juliet Labog-Javellana in Manila; and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Credit . . .

From page A1

to push Congress into passing tax measures before the Christmas break.

"For us who have been in government for so long, it's sickening because we have seen it," said Arroyo, referring to the usual ploy of the Palace to use foreign groups "to achieve what government wants to achieve."

In a privilege speech, he said "we are a sturdy people, and we will survive all these."

Malacañang considers indispensable the passage of tax measures this year to avert a credit rating downgrade.

International ratings firms earlier warned that the country's credit rating could be downgraded if none of the proposed fiscal measures were passed before the end of the year.

A downgrade will raise interest rates and further jack up the country's debt payments.

"Now, we are touchy to the slightest hint of downgrade by Moodys, Standard and Poor, and Fitch when we don't even owe them any money," the senator said.

"Before, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and WB (World Bank) would enter only our living rooms, probably our bedrooms. But now, Moody's and company enter at will our bathrooms and see us nude and our bare essentials for all to see. How more dehumanized can we get?" Arroyo said.

He said, "Enough already of the much-ballyhooed rating agencies and the impending downgrade they are foisting because we have had already a de facto downgrade and its effects have been and are already being felt."

Special session

He said there was a lot of talk about calling a special session so that Congress could pass the tax measures before the end of the holiday season.

"What for? The Senate has been deliberating on the tax bills for three months. But tax measures cannot be rushed and the executive knows that and has not helped any. It wants the legislature to work overtime on the tax bills but the executive does not want to work overtime to collect more taxes," he said.

Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio said President Macapagal-Arroyo would call a special session of Congress if the House of Representatives and Senate fail to pass at least two tax measures by Thursday.

"The agreement is for Congress to pass at least two of the tax measures before the adjournment of sessions on Friday," Claudio said, adding that the measures should be ratified by Thursday which is the last day of the session.

Sin taxes, lateral attrition

Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday said Congress would try to pass the sin taxes and lateral attrition bill before Friday. "(O)therwise the President will be forced to call a special session, which we will support," Drilon said.

Under House Bill No. 3174, the House of Representatives wants a 20-percent increase in excise taxes to be imposed on tobacco and alcohol products, while Senate Bill No. 1815, currently under debate, wants a higher rate.

The lateral attrition bill calls for incentives and penalties on tax collection agencies.

Drilon said the Senate could not pass the tax amnesty bill because of resistance from some senators.

Arroyo said all eyes were unfairly fixed on Congress passing the revenue measures, but he said the onus should be on the executive branch.

He explained that sometime back, a very simple proposition was conveyed to the President through backdoor channels.

The senator said Congress could enact measures that would yield P40 billion on the condition that the bureaus of internal revenues and customs would collect the other half (P40 billion), which would represent an additional seven percent more in BIR collections.

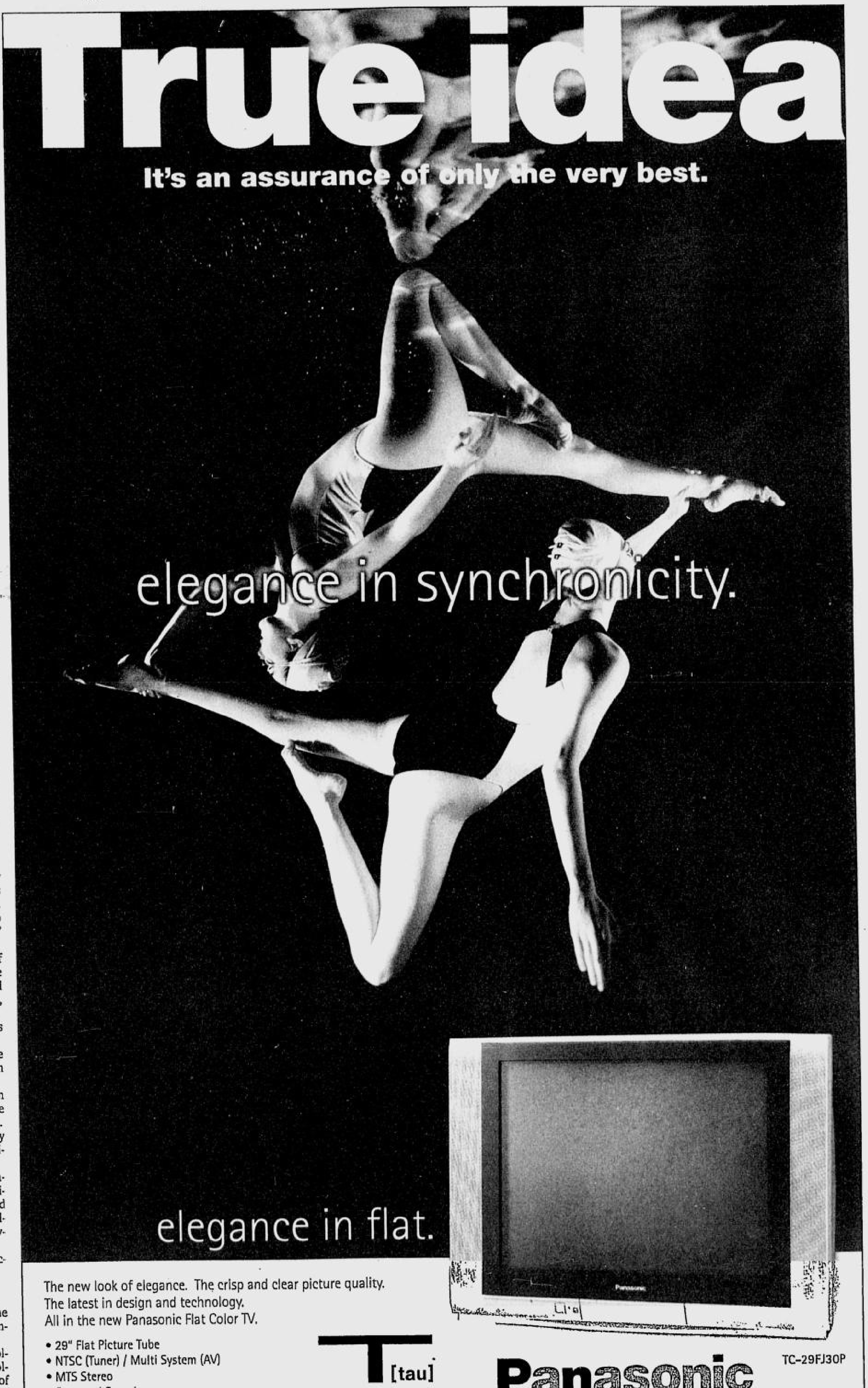
But there was no response from the collection agencies, he said.

Breakdown of discipline

"Instead, we are being badgered to pass the Lateral Attrition Law to coerce revenue agencies to collect more taxes," he said.

"Why we need such a law to compel tax collectors to do their duty of increasing their collections is symptomatic of the breakdown of discipline in the bureaucracy. The irony of ironies is that this bill had been enacted already during President (Joseph) Estrada's time in the 11th Congress but was vetoed by President Arroyo when she assumed office," the senator said.

He also scored the Palace for backing out of its earlier proposal to tax text messages and impose a franchise tax on telecommunication companies. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michelle V. Remo*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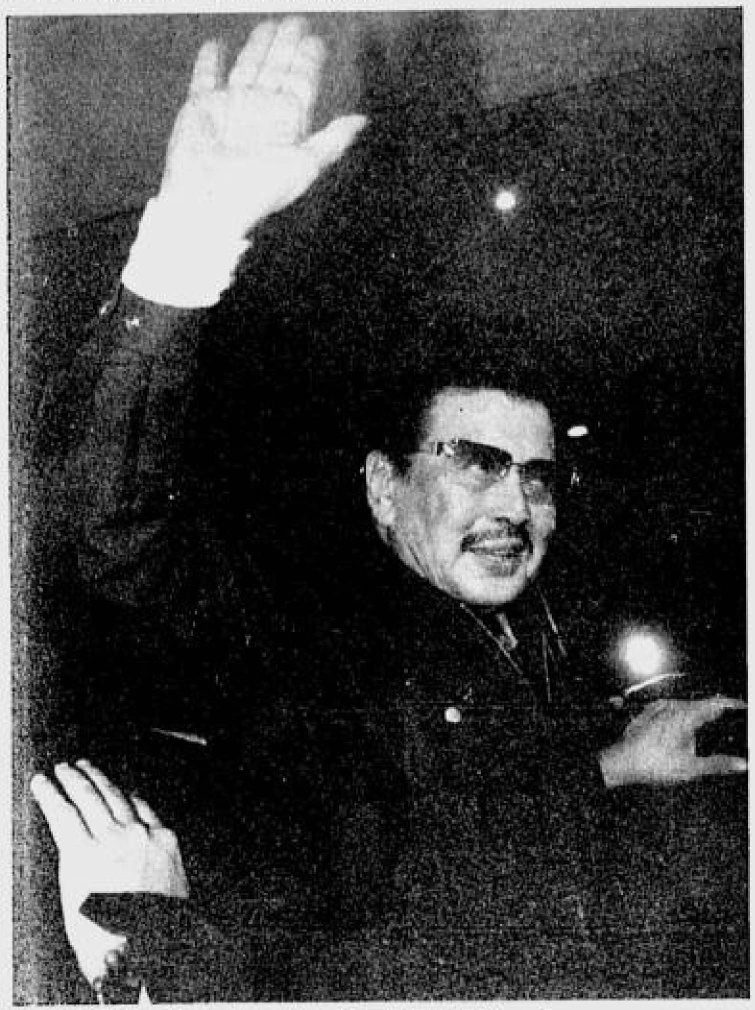
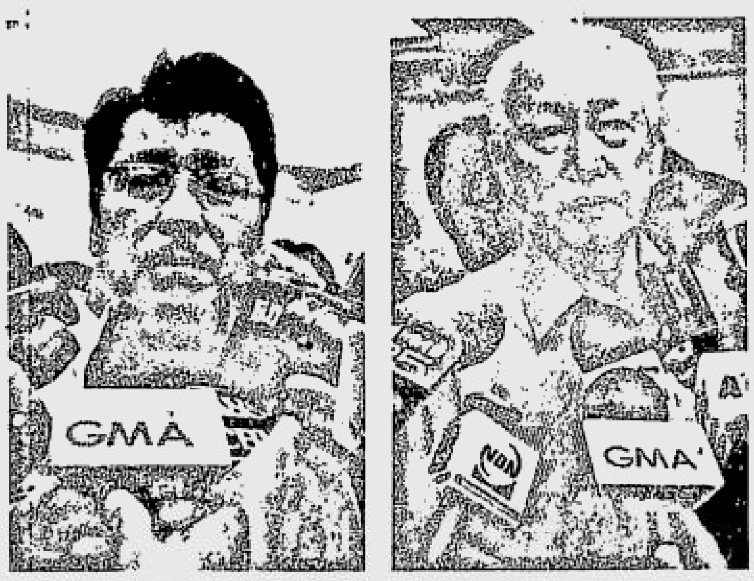


EARLY visitors include ex-President Joseph Estrada … RAFFY LERMA

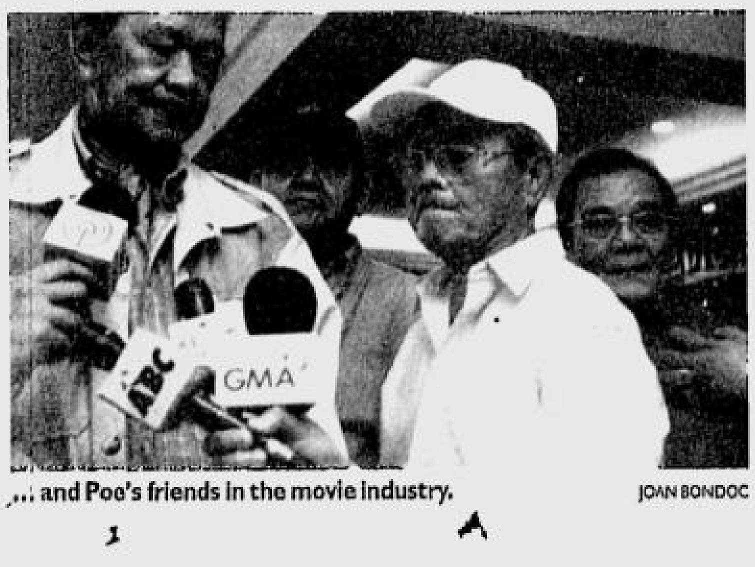
… FILM producer Armida Siguion-Reyna, Rep. Imee Marcos and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada … RAFFY LERMA

… MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay and ex-Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan … RAFFY LERMA



… SENATORS Lito Lapid and Alfredo Lim … JOAN BONDOC

… SEN. Ramon Revilla Jr. and actor Rudy Fernandez … RAFFY LERMA



… and Poe's friends in the movie industry. JOAN BONDOC

'Da King' is dead

From page A1

because of his present condition."

Asked on television later if the 65-year-old Poe's condition had, in fact, turned for the worse, Escudero said: "Yes."

At one point in the press conference, Escudero sounded like it was only a matter of time.

"Although his condition deteriorated, we are still praying that his life be lengthened and that he can still wait for some of his loved ones who have yet to arrive and want to see him before anything happens to him," the lawmaker said.

Escudero said a number of Poe's relatives living abroad had started arriving.

The entire third floor of St. Luke's Medical Center, where Poe was confined in the neuro-intensive care unit, had been cleared to make space for family and friends.

Poe had lapsed into a coma after he suffered what a medical bulletin said was "a severe brain attack" or stroke. His other internal organs had also been affected, the bulletin said. *(See story on Page A1.)*

The bulletin was signed by Poe's attending neurologist, Dr. Abdias V. Aquino, head of the Stroke Service of the Institute for Neurosciences of St. Luke's.

Given an emergency liberty pass by the Sandiganbayan where he is on trial for plunder, deposed President Estrada wept when he visited his buddy on Sunday night.

"It was emotional. You know, they have been friends for 40 years," San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito said in a telephone interview.

Can FPJ hear?

"He was already weeping when he arrived at the hospital," added Estrada's son by actress Guia Gomez.

Ejercito said that during the visit, his father, detained in his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, repeatedly spoke to Poe, hoping his friend could somehow hear what he was saying.

Poe's 21-year-old son, Ronian, met Estrada at the hospital. The young man raised Estrada's hand to his forehead—a Filipino sign of respect accorded to the elderly—and the ex-President embraced Ronian tightly.

It was apparent that Estrada was in tears, an INQUIRER photographer said.

A phone call

Before he left his Tanay resthouse to go to the hospital, Estrada had also called the ICU.

Someone took the call and placed the phone's earpiece close to the unconscious Poe on the chance that he might hear that his friend was calling him.

But Poe gave no sign he heard, those present in the ICU said.

"In simple language, his condition deteriorated from last night, compared to this morning," Escudero said, interpreting the medical bulletin.

A flicker of hope

Asked about Poe's condition when he last saw him, the Sorsogon lawmaker said: *"Ayaw ko mang gamitin pero medyo nakakalunos ang kundisyon niya* (I don't want to say it but his condition is a bit grim)."

Escudero said Poe had been attached to various life-saving machines and fluid-delivery tubes.

He said Poe's family and friends were somewhat buoyed Sunday by the doctor's advice that the actor's heart remained strong while pumping blood.

"It was a big change from last (Saturday) night," Escudero said of Poe's condition as of yesterday.

While acknowledging that the medical bulletin was not positive, Escudero said: "We are, of course, praying for the best."

He said Poe's family and friends could only hope that God would listen to the storm of prayers being offered up for his survival.

Susan's strength

Susan Roces "remains strong and is the source of strength for family and friends," Escudero said.

Outside the ICU, friends, relatives and fans gathered in different areas to offer prayers. *(See story on Page A1.)*

The ICU was closed to visitors about midnight Sunday after Estrada's visit to give the Poe family some time to rest, Escudero said.

The main entrance to the hospital was clogged with hundreds of cameramen, reporters and movie fans waiting to see the personalities who would visit Poe.

Prayers for Poe

As the night deepened, the number of fans rapidly dwindled.

Shortly after midnight, Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and actor Rudy Fernandez emerged from the hospital.

"We were not able to see him inside the ICU. We were told it was already closed. Let us just pray for his speedy recovery," Revilla said.

At about 3 a.m., only a few news photographers remained outside the main entrance.

But fans and media persons were back again as early as 8 a.m. yesterday.

Beyond the brief medical bulletin, reporters could only get an idea of Poe's condition from the demeanor of the friends and relatives who visited him.

Grim looks

Most, if not all, who left the building looked grim, and visibly shaken.

The bulletin, issued after lunch, only confirmed what many feared—that Poe was falling deeper into his coma.

Expounding on the medical bulletin, Escudero said: "Last night (Sunday), his heart was beating strong. We held on to it as a sign that he would recover … but this morning and this afternoon, (the beating) has weakened."

Former San Juan Rep. Jose Mari Gonzales, a former actor, said that during his visit, he saw several doctors in the room at the same time.

"We could not see FPJ … We stayed outside of the ICU unit. But Susan … she is very composed," Gonzales said.

Streams of visitors, both from the worlds of politics and entertainment, started arriving at 11 a.m. They were still coming at press time.

The well-wishers included Senators Alfredo Lim, Lito Lapid and Aquilino Pimentel, and Rep. Imee Marcos.

Berting Labra, Poe's friend and co-star in many films, came with several other persons from the entertainment industry.

'Health buff' not fond of doctors

By Christine O. Avendaño

HE ONCE played the role of a neurosurgeon in a 2000 film titled "Ang Dalubhasa," but only a few people know that Fernando Poe Jr. isn't fond of being around doctors.

Close friend and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III said Poe was not even keen about having his blood pressure checked.

"Hindi siya mahilig magpatingin (He didn't like going to the doctor)," Sotto said in a phone interview.

Still, Poe was a "health buff."

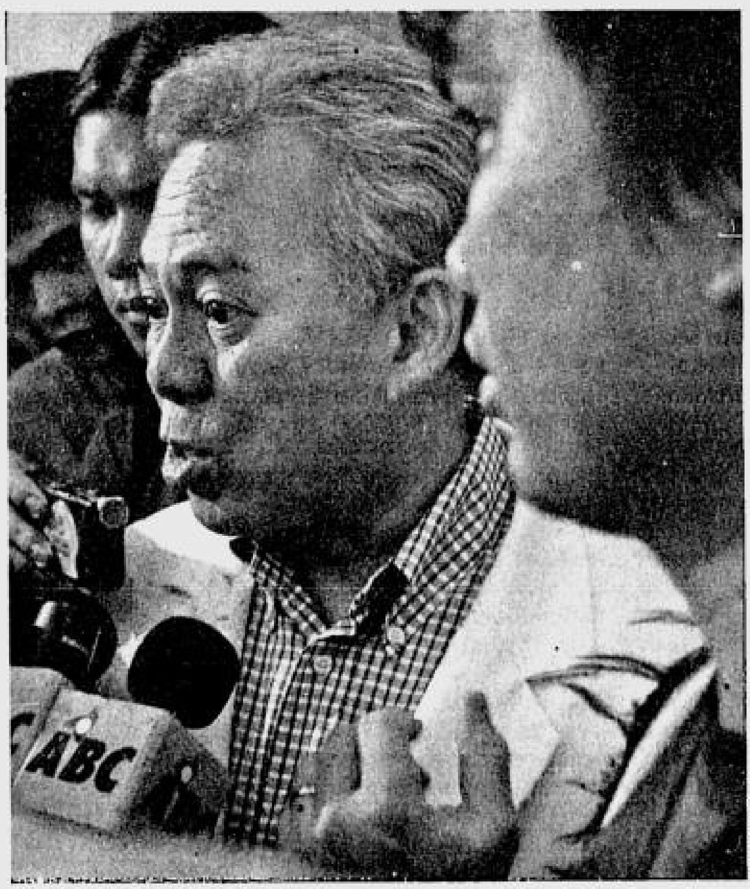
Every month, Sotto said, Poe would hie off to Batangas or Antipolo, where he would hike the hills and mountains.

"He has a regular routine. He likes to climb mountains," Sotto said.

The only time the actor broke his routine was when he campaigned for president earlier this year.

Poe, who drinks red wine and beer, has cut down on his drinking since his friend, ousted leader Joseph Estrada, ran for president in 1998, Sotto said.

He said the only time he saw Poe sick during the election campaign was when the latter had a cough or a cold.



RLM ZAMORA

NEUROLOGIST Dr. Abdias Aquino of St. Luke's Medical Center is inteviewed by journalists about Poe's condition Sunday.

Friends, fans, foes offer prayers for FPJ recovery

From page A1

Arroyo, among other people, had been named winners of the "People of the Year Awards" of People Asia magazine, which were handed out last night.

It would have been their first meeting since Ms Arroyo beat Poe by one million votes in the presidential election in May. Poe's camp claimed the victory was marred by fraud.

A President's prayers

Receiving her award, Ms Arroyo said it celebrated the excellence and heroism of the Filipino amid adversities.

"But I am sad that our celebration is incomplete with the absence of Fernando Poe Jr. who suffered a severe stroke the other night," Ms Arroyo said. "He is an icon of our people's aspirations and I have prayed all this time for his speedy recovery," she said in a speech.

"The daily Mass in Malacañang is offered for his intentions," she added.

There were no outward indications that Ms Arroyo would pay Poe a visit.

A Malacañang source said it would not be in accordance with protocol for her to visit the actor at the hospital. It was also possible that Poe's supporters would not take her presence kindly, the source said.

"The way they acted in the past, it seems that the wounds have not been healed," the source added.

Asked if any representative of Ms Arroyo would visit the critically ill actor, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "She has (issued) a statement. For the meantime I think that statement would suffice."

Bunye ignored reports that diehard supporters of Poe had sent word for Ms Arroyo not to show up at the hospital.

Flowers from Noli

Vice President Noli de Castro sent a card and flowers to the actor's family.

"My family is praying for [his] recovery … Our prayers are what Mr. Poe and his family need right now," he said in a statement.

Many administration officials kept a polite distance and a low profile.

Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio did not want to talk about Poe's ailment but said: "We join the nation in fervent prayers that he will recover soon."

Romulo Macalintal, Ms Arroyo's lawyer in the protest filed by Poe against her in the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, said this was not the time for politics.

Set politics aside

"This is the time to show our concern for FPJ and his family. This is the time to set aside politics … and to pray for his family to be ready in case the Lord takes him back," Macalintal said in a phone interview.

The country's Roman Catholic bishops also prayed for Poe's recovery.

Said Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines president Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla: "FPJ as a famous actor has been an inspiration for many and, as a presidential candidate, was hailed by many as a symbol of hope for the poor."

A nation's prayers

Capalla urged everyone to once again pray as a nation for the health of Poe.

"As a Filipino and a Catholic, he deserves everyone's prayers," he said.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, who was Poe's chief political adviser during the election, echoed similar sentiments.

"We are saddened by his deteriorating condition because FPJ is a symbolism of unfulfilled hopes of many Filipinos," Angara said. "He is a symbol of those who are fighting against injustice, oppression and poverty."

He said the tremendous outpouring of prayers for Poe attested to this.

Praying for their idol

A few dozen Poe supporters milled around St. Luke's hospital, if only to be near him.

"We're here because we want to see our idol," said Lu Llabe, who traveled from Mindoro island. "We want to get first-hand info on his condition."

Dressmaker Elena Narvasa, 35, told the INQUIRER: "We are very sad and praying for him. He may even die ahead of Dolphy (Poe's longtime friend). If God takes him, we could not do anything about it."

"FPJ really felt bad about losing the election, that's why he had a stroke," said 40-year-old taxi driver Chito Valleda in Filipino. "Who wouldn't? He was cheated."

Poe's works of charity

Eugene Orejas, executive director of the disaster management institution Concern, cited Poe's unpublicized acts of charity.

Before he suffered the stroke, the actor, in a gesture of kindness, turned over 50 sacks of rice, sardines and noodles to Oplan Sagip Bayan (OSB), a coalition of nongovernment organizations advocating a community-based disaster management program.

The goods, totaling 1,000 packs, were donated by FPJ Productions. Poe personally met with OSB members at his office.

"He did not want his donations published," Orejas said. "He was in a happy mood. All he asked was an assurance that these would reach the victims. And he said he was going to give more help."

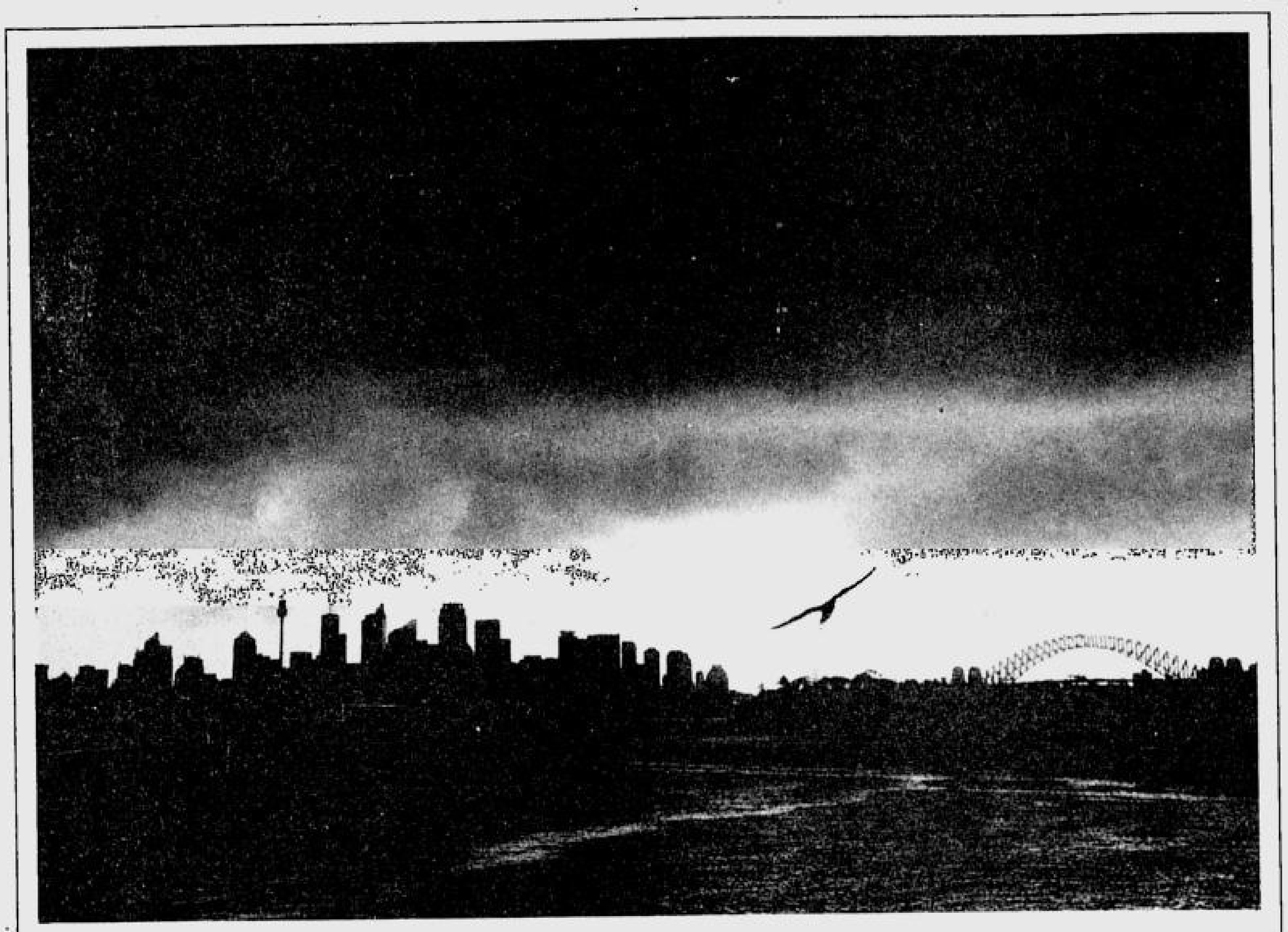
Joselito Santiago, 37, a barker and a jeepney driver for 19 years, said he was never a fan of FPJ because he found his movies "too violent."

But Santiago added: "I hope he gets well." *Juliet Labog-Javellana, Blanche Rivera, Michael Lim Ubac, Margaux Ortiz, Tina Santos, Ruth L. Navarra and Carlo Maru C. Mariano in Manila; Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau; and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Yushchenko: Authorities poisoned me



GATHERING STORM

A seagull flies in front of the Sydney city skyline as a storm approaches Dec. 13. Severe weather closed Sydney's airport and caused property damage after storms hit the city mid-afternoon producing large hailstones and causing flooding. REUTERS

KIEV—Opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko said on Sunday he was certain Ukraine's authorities had poisoned him with dioxin and hoped prosecutors would establish the truth after this month's re-run of a rigged presidential election.

Speaking to reporters on his return to Kiev a day after Austrian doctors established he had been poisoned, Yushchenko said he did not want the case to affect campaigning for his new runoff against Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich on Dec. 26.

Yushchenko, who drew vast crowds into the streets to back charges of vote-rigging, welcomed prosecutors reopening a case into what he has long said was a bid to kill him. Though in good physical form, his face remains bloated and pocked.

"I am convinced that this is the work of the authorities, absolutely convinced," Yushchenko said at Kiev airport.

"Time is now needed for the investigation. A lot of the circumstances are already known. I think if the general prosecutor acts according to Ukraine's laws, both the country and the world at large will soon know who did this."

He declined to comment further on who exactly lay behind the poisoning or where it might have originated, saying it was up to judges and prosecutors to establish the facts.

Senior Ukrainian officials, including Kuchma, have yet to comment on the poisoning revelations.

Yanukovich was initially declared the winner of the Nov. 21 runoff poll, during which he was backed by outgoing president Leonid Kuchma and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Supreme Court annulled the result on grounds of mass fraud.

Yanukovich has since turned on his mentor Kuchma, accusing him of doing nothing to stop the "orange coup"—mass protests by orange-clad Yushchenko supporters.

Yushchenko said he wanted the case to be pursued after the new runoff as he did not want it to have "any moral or ethical effect, positive or negative, on the election campaign."

Ukrainian media said prosecutors reopened the case after doctors at the Vienna clinic confirmed dioxin poisoning. The case was launched after Yushchenko first underwent treatment in September but was later closed.

Yushchenko had earlier told reporters in Vienna he was "happy to be alive." And he predicted that "the regime that was in place for 14 years in Ukraine is now living its last days."

Yushchenko likened Ukraine's upheaval after the now-discredited election to the fall of the Soviet Union or the Berlin wall. Thousands of his supporters brought Kiev to a virtual halt for more than two weeks to demand a new poll. *Reuters*

New attacks on churches in Indonesia prompt alert

JAKARTA—Muslim-dominated Indonesia on Monday ordered more security at potential flashpoints after renewed attacks on Christian churches sparked fears of a repeat of deadly Christmas Eve bombings four years ago.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono told police chiefs to be on alert for possible terrorist attacks around the country after two attacks on churches in Central Sulawesi province late Sunday left three people seriously injured.

The separate bomb and gun attacks on the Emanuel and Anugerah churches in the provincial capital Palu come just two weeks before Christmas, fueling concerns that extremists were plotting more attacks.

A series of blasts at churches across Indonesia on Christmas Eve 2000 left 19 dead. The attacks, blamed on Muslim militants, preceded the October 2001 Bali bombings in which 202 people were killed.

Authorities say the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group was responsible for the Bali strike. Some have blamed the organization—behind several other major blasts—of having a hand in the church attacks.

Central Sulawesi has seen intermittent violence between Muslims and Christians since more than 1,000 people were killed in clashes four years ago. The government has sponsored peace talks but tensions persist.

Five months ago gunmen opened fire on a church in Palu, killing a female minister and wounding four worshippers. In May, a prominent Christian prosecutor was killed in Palu as he left another church.

Cabinet Secretary Sudi Silalahi on Monday told journalists that Yudhoyono had summoned top security minister Widodo Adisucipto and National Police Chief General Da'i Bachtiar to discuss measures to halt further attacks.

"The president instructed the national police chief to step up security and protection in Palu and anticipate the possibilities... We should be alert so that this does not take place in other areas," Silalahi said.

He said the cities of Jakarta, Medan in North Sumatra, Makassar in South Sulawesi would get special attention as potential troublespots. Police have already announced extra guards at 332 churches in Surabaya, East Java. *AFP*

Japan cops step up fight against 'it's me' fraud

TOKYO—You might think that by now, most people would know better.

Japanese police and media have been warning the public for months about so-called "it's me" scams in which swindlers cheat victims out of money by phoning and posing as a relative who desperately needs cash to get out of a bind.

Despite the campaign, the victims—often middle-aged or elderly women—were duped out of more than 15 billion yen ($142 million) in the first 10 months of 2004, up from 4.3 billion yen for all of 2003, National Police Agency figures show.

"We keep telling people to be careful and still they are taken in," a police official said on Monday after the Agency set up a special task force to crack down on the scam.

"When someone gets a phone call like this in the midst of a peaceful life, they get upset and lose their presence of mind."

The scams typically begin with a call from a person claiming to be a son, daughter or other relative in need of money for such purposes as an out-of-court settlement after a traffic accident, to fund a girlfriend's abortion or to pay off a loan shark.

The distraught family member is persuaded to send the funds to a designated bank account by electronic transfer.

"People who were victimized said they'd heard about it, but never thought it would happen to them," the police official said.

The antifraud campaign has, however, prompted some culprits to become more creative.

Many perpetrators now identify themselves as police officers, lawyer or even gangsters acting on behalf of a relative instead of pretending to be a family member and starting the conversation with the "ore, ore"—"it's me"—that gave the scam its name.

Such cases, including "theatrical troupe-style fraud," so called because several perpetrators get into an elaborate act playing different roles, netted another 7 billion yen so far this year, the police data showed.

"I didn't realize it was a fraud because the caller didn't say 'it's me,'" a newspaper quoted one victim as saying. *Reuters*

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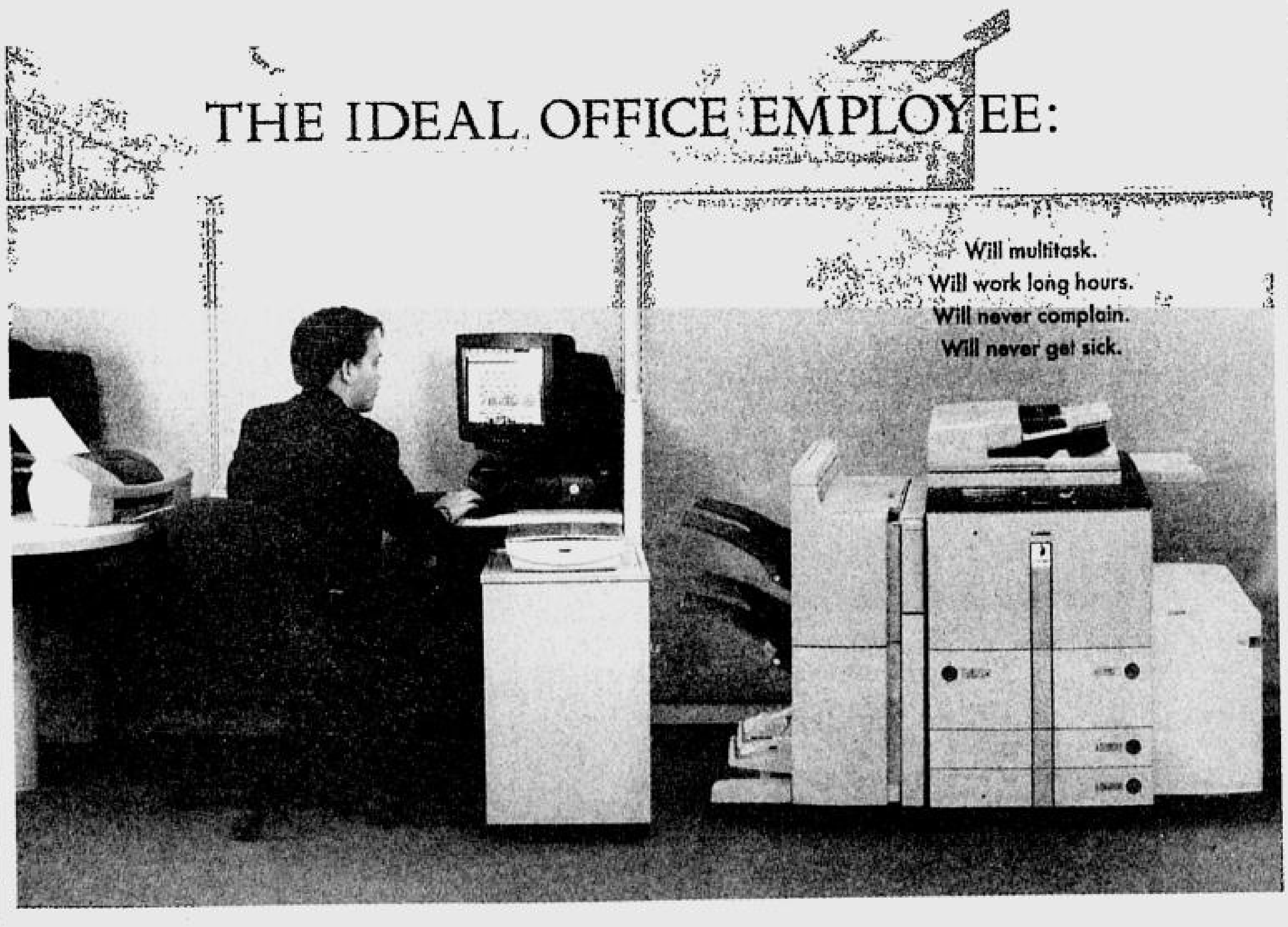

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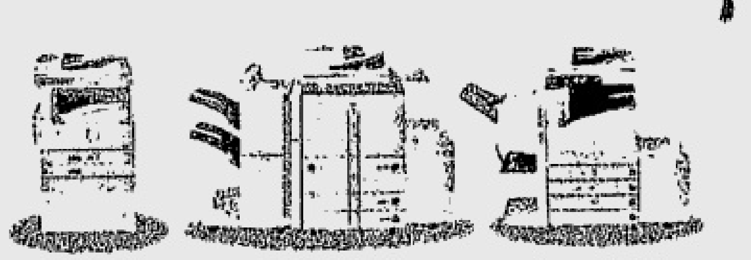
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Baghdad bomber kills 7 1 yr after Saddam capture

BAGHDAD—A suicide car bomber killed at least seven Iraqis at an entrance to Baghdad's Green Zone government and US diplomatic compound on Monday, a year to the day since US forces captured Saddam Hussein.

At least 17 people were also wounded, civilian hospital staff said. The US military said no US soldiers were hurt.

It was not clear if any of the Iraqi National Guard troops which also man the checkpoint had been killed or wounded.

"We had stopped in the car when all we felt was a car explode next to us," said one injured Iraqi civilian at the city's busy Yarmuk hospital, his face caked with blood.

"A suicide bomber hit Checkpoint 12. It's pretty ugly," a US officer said inside the Green Zone.

Iraqi police said the bomber drove a car and a US military spokesperson said several other cars were also destroyed.

The checkpoint, close to the main airport highway, is on a main entrance to the sprawling complex which was Saddam's presidential palace. It now houses the US and other embassies and the offices of the US-backed Iraqi interim government.

At the civilian Yarmuk hospital, a senior doctor said they had received seven bodies and were treating 17 wounded. Staff wheeled in a wounded man as doctors sewed up the bloodied hand of a young woman whose head was bandaged.

Monday is the first anniversary of the capture of Saddam by US forces after eight months on the run. At that time, US President George W. Bush and US military commanders hoped the former president's arrest would puncture guerrilla activity among his former supporters in the Sunni Arab minority.

However, violence has continued unabated and the death rate among US troops has risen since Saddam was dragged from a hiding hole in farmland near his home town of Tikrit.

Some of Saddam's old lieutenants went on hunger strike on Saturday over access to lawyers and fears of being handed over to Iraqis after the election, their lawyers said.

The 67-year-old former president, held separately from his former aides, was not among those who were refusing some food.

Former deputy prime minister Tareq Aziz, once Saddam's urbane envoy to the outside world, and former vice president Taha Yassin Ramadan were among dozens refusing food, Aziz's lawyer said. Nearly all of the 55 "most wanted" Iraqis sought by US troops after the war are held at a secret location.

US and Iraqi officials fear violence could increase, despite the offensive against rebel strongholds in Falluja, in the run up to a national election on Jan. 30.

The vote, Iraq's first fully free election, is expected to consolidate power for the long-oppressed 60-percent Shi'ite Muslim minority at the expense of Saddam's fellow Sunnis.

Iraq's figurehead interim president, Sunni tribal leader Ghazi Yawar, warned continued violence and occupation could cause serious problems if Iraqis felt "humiliated."

"This could in the long term create an environment in which an Iraqi Hitler could emerge like the one created by the defeat of Germany and the humiliation of Germans in World War One," Yawar told the London-based Asharq al-Awsat newspaper.

There were sharp clashes in the east of Falluja on Sunday and US officers say the city is still not safe enough for some 200,000 local people to return home. US jets bombed the east of the city on Sunday and residents heard sustained gunfire. *Reuters*

AN IRAQI girl looks out from her shelter past flames at a camp for Falluja refugees in Habaniya, near Baghdad, Dec. 12. An Iraqi Red Crescent convoy was allowed into Falluja on Saturday to deliver humanitarian supplies, but left before nightfall due to sporadic fighting between US troops and guerrillas. REUTERS

7 US Marines killed west of Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Seven US Marines were killed in two separate incidents west of Baghdad on Sunday, the US military said in a statement on Monday.

It said they were killed in Anbar province, a region which includes the violent towns of Falluja and Ramadi, but it gave no further details of the heaviest daily death toll for US troops since the end of their offensive on Falluja a month ago.

In all, eight Marines were killed over the weekend in Anbar province, one on Saturday and seven in the Sunday incidents.

There were sharp clashes in the east of Falluja on Sunday and US officers say the city is still not safe enough for some 200,000 local people to return home. US jets bombed the east of the city on Sunday and residents heard sustained gunfire.

The nearby town of Ramadi remains a bastion of the insurgency, where clashes with US troops are frequent.

With the latest deaths, the number of US troops killed in action since the invasion of Iraq 21 months has risen to at least 1,015, and the total US dead to 1,290.

Nearly 10,000 Americans have been wounded, the majority of them severely. *Reuters*

Bin Laden 'definitely' in region, says Karzai

KABUL—Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Sunday that Osama bin Laden is "definitely" in the region and will eventually be caught, even though American and Pakistani generals insist the trail is cold.

"It's very difficult to say where he is hiding. He cannot be away from this region. He's definitely in this region," Karzai told CNN's Late Edition. "We will get him sooner or later, trust me on that."

Speculation on Bin Laden's whereabouts has long focused on the mountains along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the al-Qaida leader slipped away from Afghan and US forces three years ago.

Pakistan's Army has mounted a series of bloody offensives against foreign fighters near the border this year, and American forces launched a winter-long operation last week against Taliban rebels on the Afghan side.

But there has been no indication they are close to seizing the suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States which prompted US President George W. Bush to launch Operation Enduring Freedom with an assault on Afghanistan.

Pressed in the CNN interview, recorded Sunday in the Afghan capital, Karzai declined to say whether Bin Laden could be in Afghanistan, or in Pakistan. He said he knew of no suggestion the al-Qaida leader could be in neighboring Iran.

"But we can definitely say he's around this region and he can't run forever," Karzai said.

Even though Bin Laden remains at large, and Taliban militants continue to kill Afghan and US soldiers despite an offer of amnesty, Karzai has said he is more alarmed at Afghanistan's booming narcotics industry, which the United Nations says is turning it into a "narco-state."

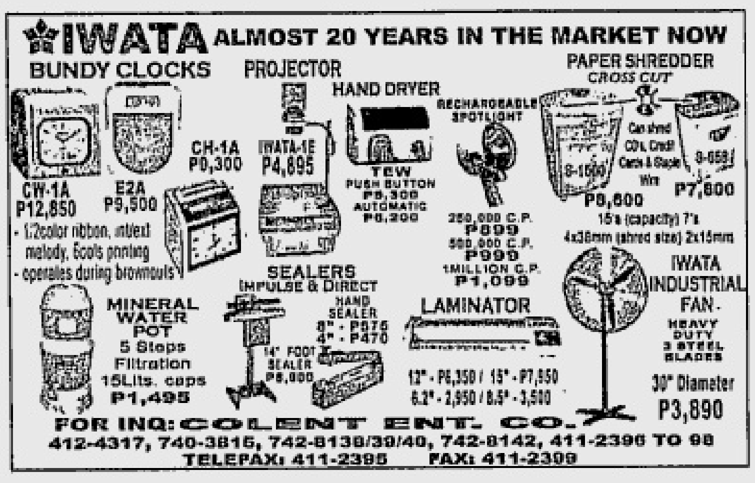
On Sunday, Afghan judges and prosecutors began training for special courts which officials hope will begin jailing heroin and opium kingpins early next year.

US and British counter-narcotics experts are training Afghan security forces who have already begun destroying drug stockpiles, smashing refining laboratories and arresting traffickers.

Plans are also being laid to punish farmers by destroying opium poppy crops in key growing regions early next year. Meanwhile, hundreds of millions of dollars are earmarked to help them switch to less lucrative but legal crops.

Karzai said Afghans were "embarrassed" to be the world's biggest suppliers of opium and heroin.

"I promise you, and I like that American people and the rest of the world should know this, that we will fight poppy," he said. "We know it hurts us, it hurts you, it hurts everybody. So we will fight it." *AP*



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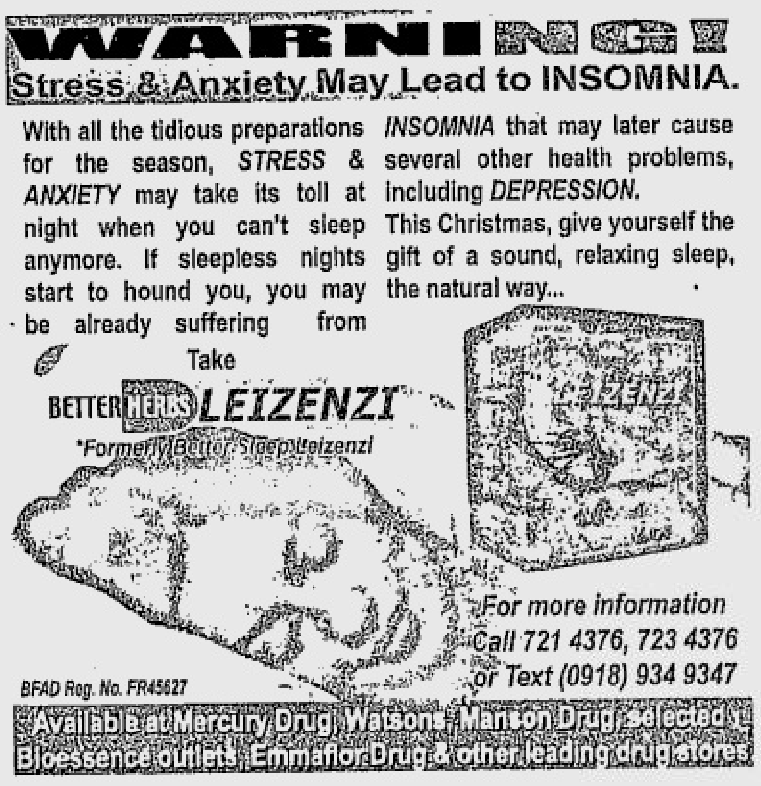

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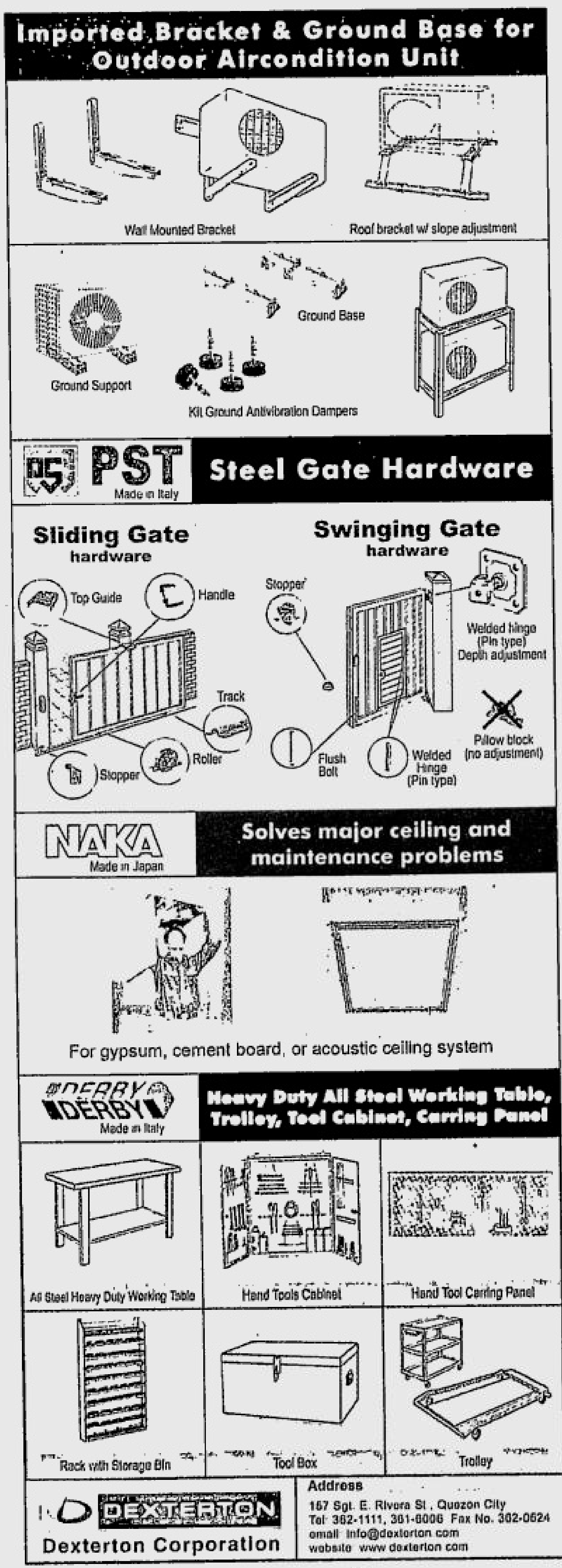

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A COMPOSITE picture shows jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti (left) and Palestine Liberation Organization Chief Mahmud Abbas. Barghouti announced Dec. 12 that he is withdrawing from the contest to become the next president of the Palestinian Authority, confirming his support for Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas). AFP

Gaza violence dents hopes of Mideast peace

GAZA—Israel struck back with missiles at Gaza Strip militants on Monday after five Israeli troops were killed in a resurgence of violence that has dented hopes of peace after Yasser Arafat's death.

The bloodshed underlined the challenge facing moderate Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, whose victory in a Jan. 9 election to replace Arafat is virtually assured after jailed uprising leader Marwan Barghouthi withdrew.

Israeli helicopters fired eight missiles at targets in Gaza City, cutting off electricity when they hit a generator. Another of the buildings hit was a metal foundry, which the Army said was used to make weapons. There were no reports of casualties.

Hours later, Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Nablus killed a gunman from Islamic militant group Hamas—one of the factions behind Sunday's attack on an Israeli military outpost at the border between Gaza and Egypt.

Militants have stepped up attacks in Gaza ahead of a planned Israeli withdrawal from the occupied strip next year, hoping to claim a pullout as a victory. The army aims to smash them first.

Growing violence in Gaza has dealt a blow to optimists who thought Arafat's death on Nov 11. in a Paris hospital could usher in calm to end a four-year-old uprising and bring peace to the Middle East after decades of conflict.

Israel has said it could talk to a new Palestinian leadership if it reins in militant groups, but will otherwise carry out its plan to withdraw troops and settlers from the Gaza Strip alone.

"Our firm demand to the Palestinian Authority, as a preliminary stage, is to stop terror," Israel's Deputy Defense Minister Ze'ev Boim told Israel Radio. "Stopping terror as a condition to move on is justified."

Sunday's carefully planned attack on the Israeli post was the Army's heaviest loss in seven months. Militants burrowed underneath and set off a 1,500 kg bomb, turning buildings to rubble and killing five soldiers of a Bedouin Arab unit.

Israel closed the Rafah border with Egypt—the only real access to the outside world for residents of fenced-in Gaza, who are only very rarely allowed to cross into Israel.

Boim said Israel would respond to violence, but still try to ease conditions for Palestinians so that next month's presidential election goes smoothly.

Abbas, 69, was ensured a clear run after firebrand uprising leader Barghouthi pulled out on Sunday. Abbas has often condemned violence and is expected to try to revive talks with Israel that stalled before the uprising blew up in 2000. *Reuters*

Taiwan police arrest 5 over president's shooting

TAIPEI—Taiwan police said Monday they have arrested five people for allegedly manufacturing the bullets used in the mysterious election-eve shooting of President Chen Shui-bian earlier this year.

Police seized the gang on Aug. 15 in southern Tainan county on charges of the illegal manufacture and possession of firearms, in what a top US forensic expert said was a "significant" step toward solving the case.

President Chen and Vice President Annette Lu were slightly wounded on March 19 when two bullets grazed their bodies as they campaigned in an open-topped jeep in southern Tainan.

No-one has yet been arrested for the shooting, which angry opposition politicians said was staged in an attempt to secure a sympathy vote for Chen in the closing stages of the election.

Taiwanese police have previously said the bullets used in the shooting were home-made.

One of the suspects "described in detail how they manufactured bullets," Hou You-yi, head of the Criminal Investigation Bureau, told reporters.

"He even manufactured a bullet which was exactly the same as one of the two found in the shooting case regarding machine mark."

The internal structure of the bullet the suspect made also matched that of the bullets hitting Chen and Lu, Hou said while showing a slide the police had not unveiled before.

Other evidence found against Tang was a paper police found in a search of his home on Oct. 12 that unveiled the structure and specification of bullets he made, Prosecutor Wang Jung-sen said.

"Previously he was just one of the suspects on our list. But the findings have convinced us he is the man we want," Wang said.

"Now we are almost sure he is the man who made the bullets that were used to shoot the president and the vice president," Hou said.

But Hou said "there is still a long way to go" in solving the mystery case as the suspects said they were not sure who had purchased their bullets.

However famed US forensic expert Henry Lee, who carried out an investigation into the case at the invitation of Taiwanese authorities, hailed the fresh development.

"At least this is a significant progress," Lee said in an interview with cable Eastern Television.

"It's like catching a needle in ocean, and they did it."

"Now what the police should do is find out how many guns and bullets the suspect made and who he sold them to. They should continue their investigation along the line.

"If police can find the gunman, then they may be able to discover his motivation in doing this." The Supreme Prosecutors' Office on Nov. 5 unveiled Lee's crime scene investigation report, which runs to more than 100 pages. *AFP*

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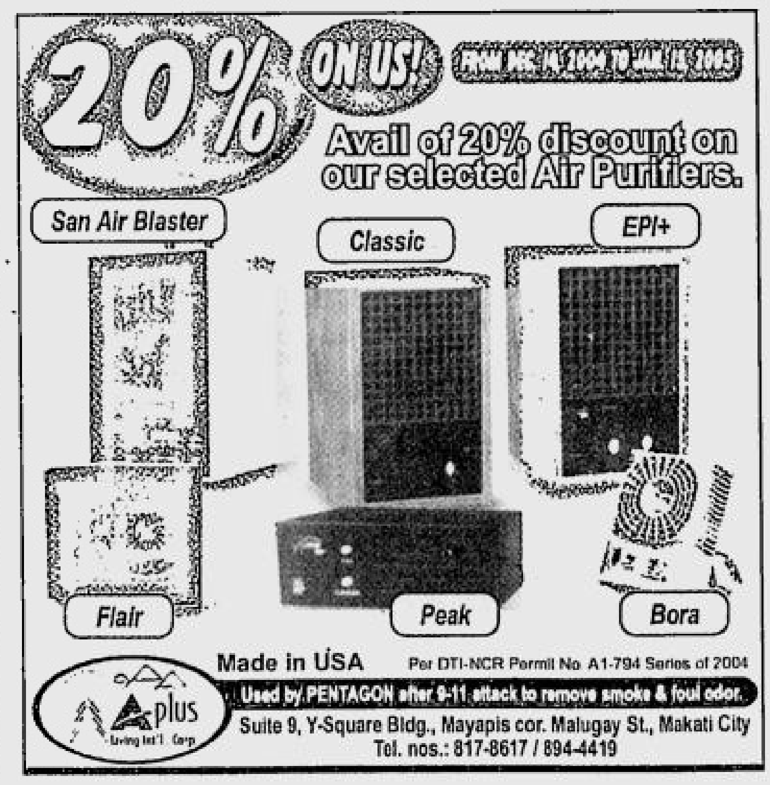
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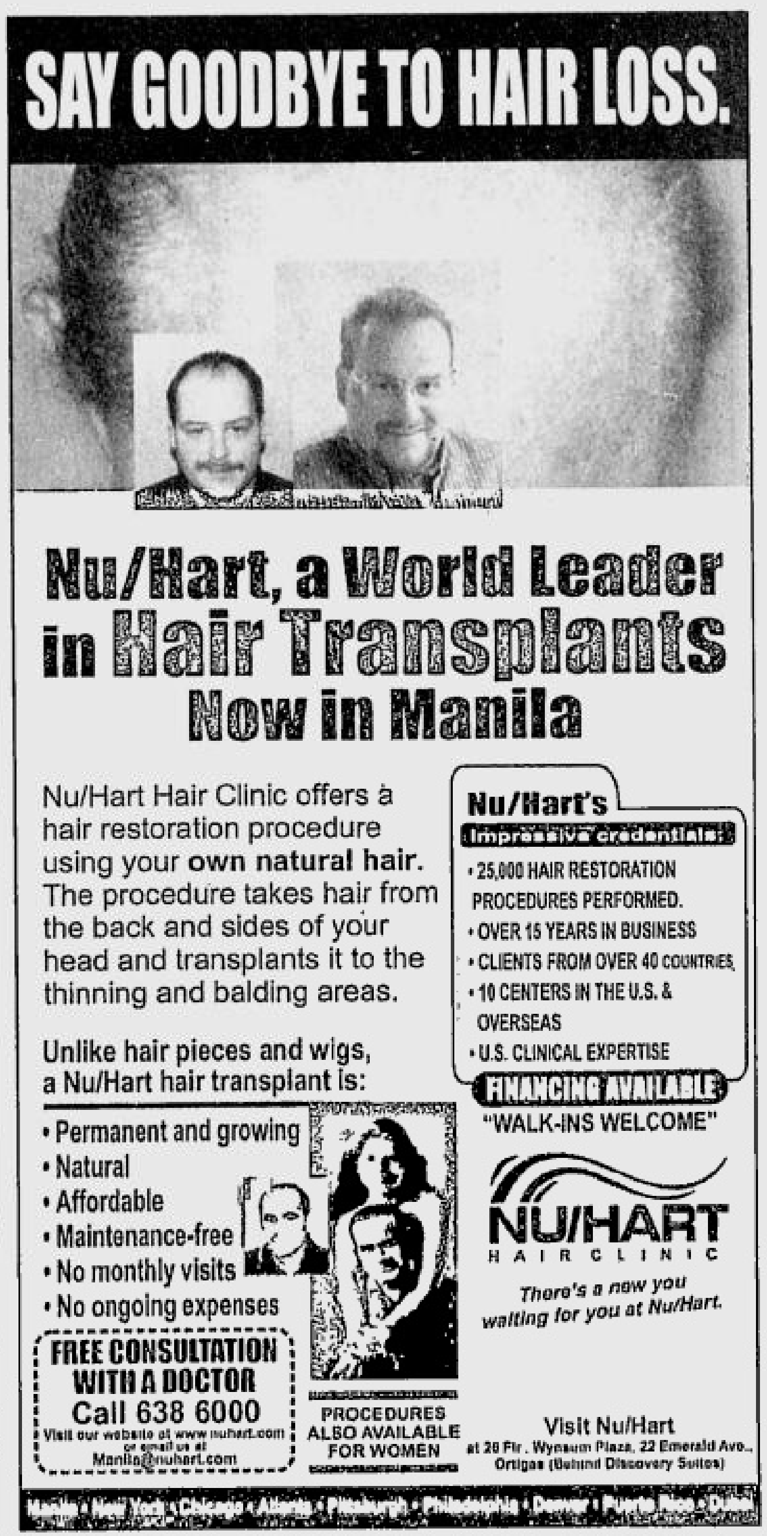
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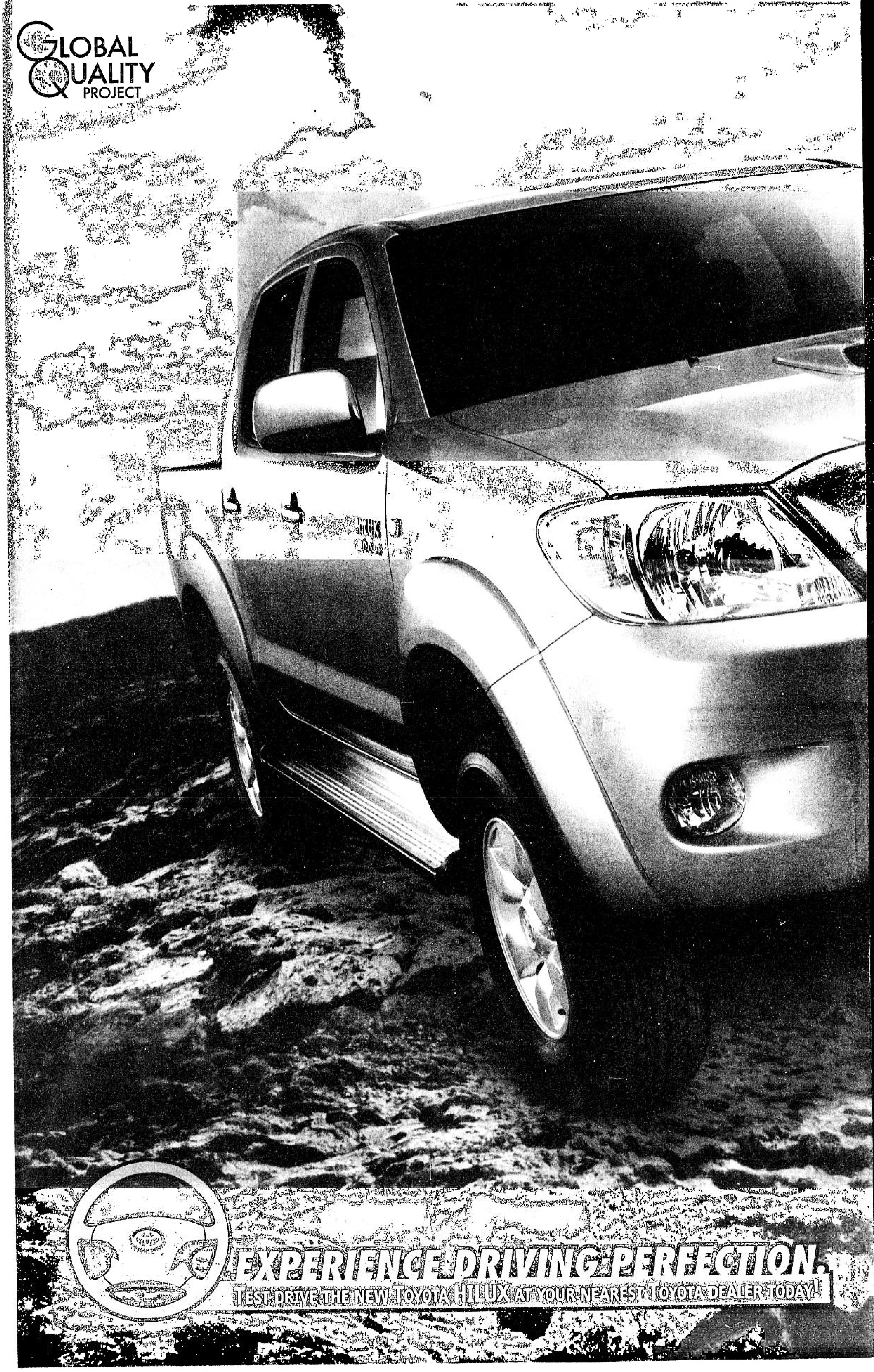
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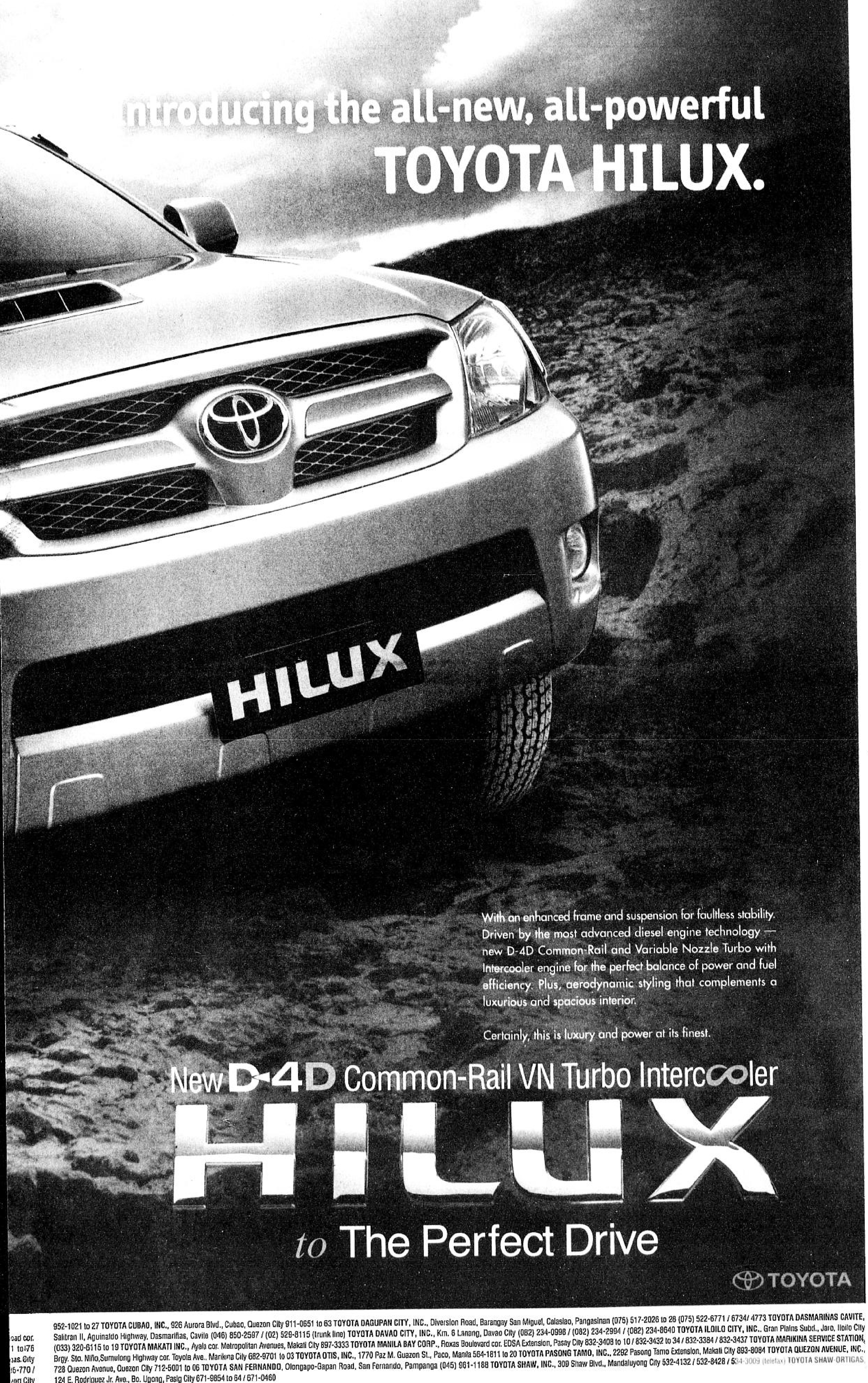

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Conservation

EDITORIAL

MORE than a week after four typhoons struck various parts of Luzon, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System warned that Metro Manila could have a water shortage. The MWSS said the avalanche of logs and mud triggered by the storms had severely damaged a 13-kilometer tunnel that brings water to Angat Dam from the Umiray River in General Nakar, Quezon.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said that the damage to Umiray tunnel was unprecedented. She assured the people, however, that the government was working round the clock to repair the damage. On Sunday, Malacañang again sought to allay the fears of a water shortage in Metro Manila. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the repair of the tunnel would be completed in time to avert a water crisis.

Still, the earlier statement of the MWSS should be viewed in connection with a warning made in October by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration of drier conditions for the rest of the year and slightly warmer than normal temperatures in the first half of 2005. Pagasa, in an advisory on another El Niño episode, said that the persistent warming of the atmosphere over the central equatorial Pacific Ocean had expanded. It also said an increased risk of below-normal rainfall was expected in most parts of the country in the first quarter of 2005.

Warmer temperatures will generally mean less rain, and less rain will mean less water. A hotter than usual dry season will also mean increased use of water in most households.

So, despite the more recent statements of Malacañang downplaying the threat of a water shortage, the people of the metropolis, and indeed of the rest of the country, would be well-advised to prepare for a water shortage and practice water conservation. The expected deficit in rainfall early next year will adversely affect not only the household water supply but also agriculture, hydropower generation and health and sanitation, among other sectors.

More and more, water is becoming a scarce and precious commodity. Because in the past water was plentiful and relatively cheap, people never worried about a possible shortage. Now, not only because of a probable water shortage but also because of the announced increase in water rates, people should use water wisely and efficiently.

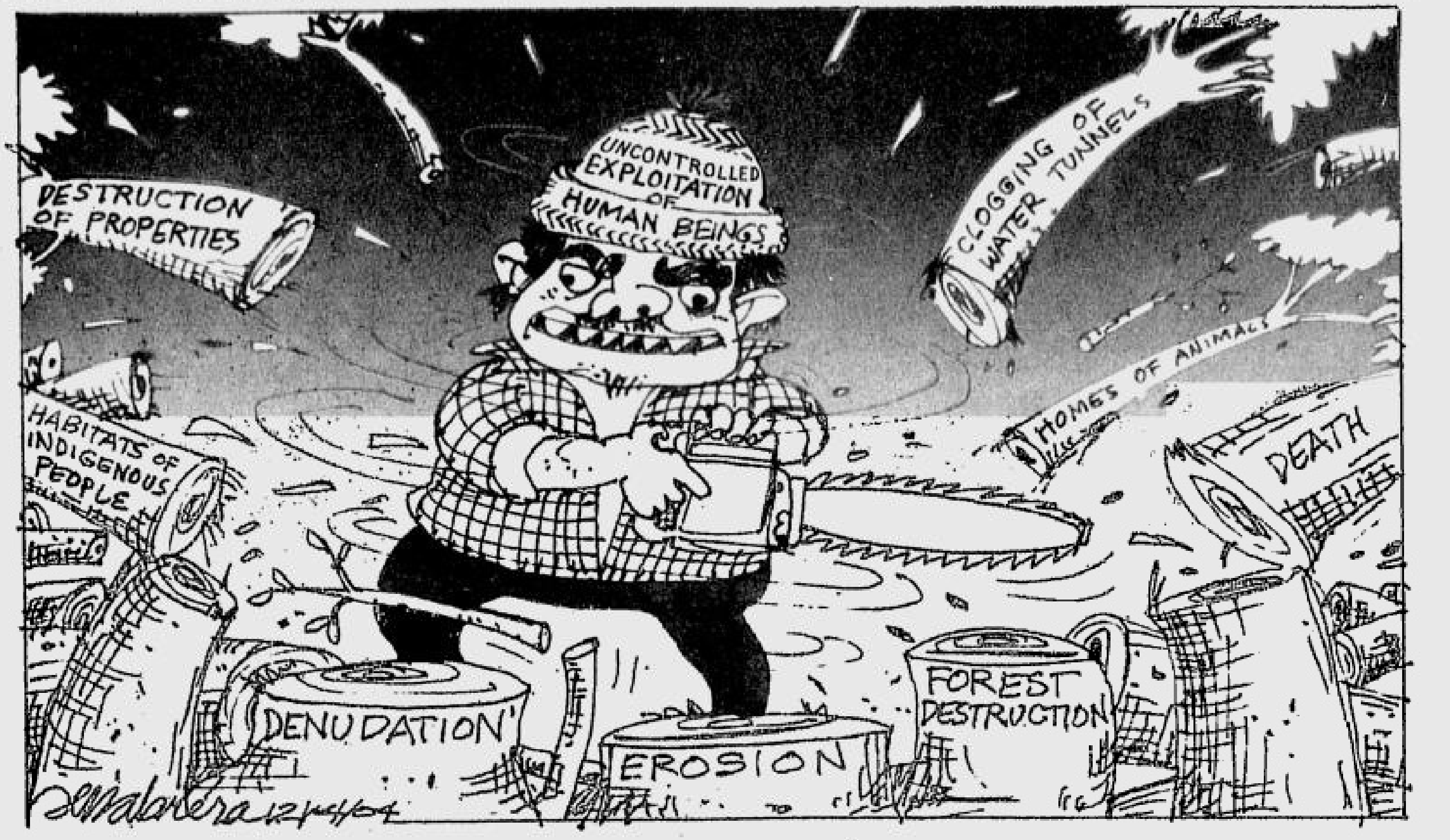
Now may be the time to insure that one's home is leak-free. Many houses have "hidden" water leaks. These can be detected by reading the water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the water meter reading goes up, there must be a leak somewhere. Leaking faucets must be repaired immediately. If a faucet drips at the rate of one drop per second, one can expect to waste 10,206 liters of water per year.

Aside from checking water leaks, other water conservation measures that may be taken are:

- Using a basin or washtub while doing the laundry, and using the rinse water for other purposes, such as mopping the floor.
- Turning the tap off while shaving or brushing one's teeth.
- Storing drinking water in pitchers or bottles instead of letting the tap run every time one wants a drink.
- Defrosting food overnight or hours before cooking, instead of using a lot of water to defrost it.
- Avoiding unnecessary flushing of the toilet and using water in a pail instead.
- Using a bucket and dipper instead of a hose in washing the car.
- Storing rain water in buckets for watering the plants or cleaning the car.

Right now, Malacañang officials are trying to avoid a scare over a possible water shortage. But we can never be sure. (We can never be sure about things that concern nature; we never expected, for instance, that four successive typhoons would hit the country and produce disastrous results.)

We cannot be complacent after the government assured us that the repair of the Umiray tunnel would be completed soon. Some things can still go wrong. And the expected "weak" El Niño episode early next year could become worse. It's best to hedge against a water shortage by storing water now, conserving it and making a habit of using water wisely and efficiently.


UNCONTROLLED EXPLOITATION OF HUMAN BEINGS
DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTIES
CLOGGING OF WATER TUNNELS
HABITATS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
HOMES OF ANIMALS
DEATH
DENUDATION
EROSION
FOREST DESTRUCTION
Salaveria 12-14-04

Blinders and tunnel vision

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

FLOOD detritus from logs and mud to smashed shacks blocked a 13-km Angat water tunnel for Metro Manila. "A mile of logs" clogged the entrance into typhoon-devastated Real's bay, delaying Philippine Navy rescue vessel DF 317.

These reflect failure, by government, to curb the ravaging of forests.

Even those who doubt whether illegal loggers are the culprit agree that despite logging bans, secondary forests are still dwindling at the rate of 480 hectares daily. The death toll and wreckage have stoked public fury.

Unfortunately, that anger will subside quickly. It often does. We are a people with short memories. Few memories of the flash floods in Ormoc, Caraga and Southern Leyte remain. And the media are always shuffling on to the next headline.

Denuded forests cannot be re-greened overnight. It takes a couple of hours to chainsaw a hectare. But even fast-growing species take years to grow. So, the next flash floods are inevitable. Postponed reforms make that a given. More people will die. That's a given too.

So what can be done? The answer perhaps is offered by the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wangari Maathai, the 64-year-old environmentalist who received the award this week in Oslo. The award cited her for launching the "Green Belt Movement" that planted 30 million trees across a denuded Kenya.

Maathai is the 12th woman (and the first from Africa) to win the peace prize since the awards started in 1901. She bested 194 nominations, including former chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix.

In the teeth of Philippine-like corruption, she organized thousands of groups, primarily of women, to plant trees. In the process, they've re-greened Kenya—and empowered citizens in democratic governance.

"The environment is very important because when we destroy our resources that become scarce, we fight over that," she told BBC. Her bottom line is: citizens, not government, will reverse degradation. All these stem from a vision that sees beyond today's multiple crises.

Time is not on our side. Writing laws into the books is not enough, Maathai told CNN. Soil or forest rehabilitation have cycles that do not bend to parliaments or armies. "My life is my message," she said.

Tunnel vision here blinds us to lethal problems beyond reckless logging. One is massive soil erosion, which will wreck future food supplies.

In China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, North Africa and Greece, states crumbled as erosion emptied granaries. Do our leaders heed historical lessons?

In Latin, *erodere* means to "gnaw away." When tree cover is stripped, the soil is "gnawed away" and becomes vulnerable to heavy downpours. In its uncultivated state, top soil—"a crustal fragile membrane that provides a foothold of life on earth"—is only seven to 25 centimeters deep.

In some Philippine uplands, topsoil depth is less than 10 cm. "At a soil depletion rate of 0.75 cm/ha/yr, it will take only some 13 years for the topsoil to be depleted," a Food and Agriculture Organization study reveals. "If one assumes a topsoil depth of 15-25 cm, as some respected Filipino soil scientists believe, then it will take 20-33 years for this layer to be removed."

To form an inch of top soil from decayed leaves and other vegetation takes a century or more. "But a single climactic event can wash away this irreplaceable and fragile carpet which needed eons to weave."

Have pork-obsessed legislators asked how much of this invaluable asset is being "mined" or lost? They should. For Ormoc, Caraga or Real are only dress rehearsals for what is ahead for other provinces.

Nationwide, only 18 percent of forest cover is left, out of the original 92 percent in 1575. But our political leaders' time scales rarely go beyond the next elections. Few seem aware of post-flash flood danger.

Even before today's deluge, erosion already blighted "more than half of the land area in 13 provinces," sapping their capacity to feed growing populations, the Philippine Council for Agricultural Research and Development points out.

Provinces with land whose productivity is being "gnawed away" are: Batangas, Cebu, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Batanes, Bohol, Masbate, Abra, Iloilo, Cavite, Rizal, Marinduque, Capiz. These 13 provinces have 50 to 90 percent of their areas eroded, says the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The worst are: Cebu—386,717 ha; Bohol—271,739 ha; Masbate—269,147 ha; Batangas—262,762 ha; and Abra—258,410 ha.

"Overall, 75 percent of croplands is vulnerable to erosion of various degrees." In the Visayas, about half (1.12 million ha) has moderate to severe erosion. Of Mindanao's 3.44 million ha, about 3.36 million are "gnawed away." For the country as a whole, some 2.87 million ha have moderate to severe erosion.

"Erosion is not an invisible disease stalking the land in search of soil to destroy," says soil scientist T.F. Shaxson. "It is a foreseeable ecological response to inappropriate land use and management." It can be reversed.

An array of technology is on the shelf since wind erosion devastated parts of the US in the 1930s. Thailand's King Bhumibol campaigns to use vitiver grass to hold back the soil. In 1985, the Ramon Magsaysay Award cited Davao-based the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center for Sloping Agricultural Land Technology.

"You can read the skies," the Master from Galilee once said. "You hypocrites. Why can you not read the signs of the times?"

* * *

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Heroes

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SIX more martyrs/heroes were added to the Wall of Remembrance last Saturday. They were Lean Alejandro, Joe Burgos, Jun Celestial, Paula Malay, Laverne Mercado and Bobbit Sanchez. Raul Roco, whom I saw at the Bantayog, quipped that if Bobbit had been there, he would probably have been amused by the idea that he was being immortalized as a hero. I agreed. I said if Bobbit had been there, he would probably have asked us to just join him for a drink.

That was the light part of things. The more serious, and insightful, part was supplied by Edita Burgos, widow of Joe. She gave a moving speech, saying the outpouring of sympathy and goodwill for her husband convinced her that Joe had only left this world in a physical sense. In all other senses, he was as present as the crowd that gathered to honor him.

I knew all of the six on the list, some more than the others. I met them at various points in my life, and my life has been the richer for it. Lean of course is well known; Gary Granada even wrote a rock musical about him. A dedicated activist and gifted communicator, he was one of the pillars of the protest movement during and after martial law. Ironically, he was felled by an assassin's bullet not during Marcos' time but during Cory's, in 1987, as he was coming home to Bayan headquarters after a press conference at the National Press Club. He was 27 when he died but his life was short only in the physical sense. It was long by the fullness with which he lived it.

Joe Burgos died last year, at 62, from cancer. He is the best known among the six, internationally as well as nationally. In 2000, to mark the end of the 20th century, the International Press Institute named him one of the 50 press freedom heroes in the world, a signal honor for him and the nation. For sheer courage and integrity, he had, and has, few peers. He it was who published Boni Gillego's exposé of Marcos' fake medals at a time when to even breathe a word of criticism against Marcos was to court mayhem. His newspapers, We Forum and Malaya, became a torch blazing in the journalistic darkness. Without them, we would not be enjoying our light today.

Jun Celestial I met only briefly in college. He was a student leader who was expelled for his activism. After martial law, he ran an underground student publication, using a mimeographing machine spirited from the student council of his school. He was "salvaged" by the military in Montalban in 1975. He was 25 when he died, but he lived a short time too only in the physical sense.

Ayi Malay is the other half of the formidable Malay tandem, the other half being her husband Armando. The last time I spoke with her was at the National Press Club. She was fuming over the idea, fomented by some writers, that Andres Bonifacio cringed and begged for his life when he was about to be executed. Nothing could be farther from the truth, Ayi said. Her researches showed the Great Plebeian was great not just in life but in death, showing only contempt for his executioners. That typified Ayi. She could be as passionate about the past as of the present. Toward the end of her days, she was still writing and learning new things.

Laverne Mercado I met only a few times at the National Council of Churches of the Philippines. He was a tremendous orator, one who could move the walls themselves to tears. He it was who gave the Protestant churches a new face, different from the conservative one they had worn throughout the last century. He led the NCCP in the fight for freedom against martial law, opening the NCCP grounds to forums that exposed its abuses. He was detained in 1974 but was released shortly later in the wake of an international outcry. His shoes will be very hard to fill.

And finally, well, I wrote about Bobbit when he died last year. His son Anthony, who represented him at the Bantayog, is right: Bobbit had a big heart but whose heart gave out in the end. I sorely miss him.

I'm glad that their names have been added to the Wall of Remembrance. It corrects two extremes in our concept of heroes. One is that heroes are people who are so removed from us they exist in such elevated planes and are beyond being reached by us. They are Rizal and Bonifacio and Apolinario Mabini, who occupy pantheons. Well, they do. But before they did, they were ordinary mortals like you and me, who drove themselves to extraordinary lengths. There is no sheen or aura that radiates from heroes, the sheen or aura comes from what they do. They are not demigods given to the world to do demigod-ic things, they are flesh and blood who know fear and grief, joy and laughter.

The second is the exact opposite, which is that heroes are a dime a dozen. That isn't so only from the looseness with which we use the word, referring among others to sports heroes. That is so as well from the capacity of this country to manufacture heroes by PR. The last two Edsas in particular had too many self-proclaimed heroes, burying in their wake the people who offered their lives to build a new world. True heroes never draw attention to their heroism, which unfortunately is an engraved invitation to scoundrels to propagate their myths. Unsung is the common lot of true heroes simply because they will not sing paeans to themselves. It is left for us to do so.

Serving the people, as all these six used to say, is its own reward. Well, honoring them is our own reward, too.

* * *

Update: So far, we have 13 musicians (and counting) for the Dec. 20 benefit at Conspiracy Café for the victims of the storms. Some visual artists are putting their works up for auction, the proceeds to go to the Prelature of Infanta. My thanks to those who have offered donations. I will keep you posted on developments in the next few days.

Patriotism not working

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OUR legislators ought to take seriously the warnings of Bangko Sentral Gov. Rafael Buenaventura about the dreadful effects of a two-notch credit downgrade or even just a downgrade of "outlook" by the various international credit rating agencies. If they don't listen to him, chances are there's no one else they would listen to. The BSP chief has stressed to media that the Southeast Asian region is awash with foreign investments being made in emerging markets, but sadly the Philippines is being left out of the loop because of its economic problems. In fact, he noted that given the amount of liquidity circulating in the SEA market, RP should be getting four times the $104.4 million in portfolio investments it got this year. He warned that a credit downgrade would make things worse as it would remove RP from the radar screens of foreign fund managers.

* * *

The media have endlessly reported that passing several revenue measures to boost RP's fiscal position is a condition for averting a downgrade. It's possible, however, that Congress will adjourn session this week without approving a single measure. In fact, the Palace is mulling calling a special session just to pass a few of them. But even with that move, everything's still iffy and the uncertainty does not help project a picture of stability for RP. It seems that appeals to patriotism have not worked on our lawmakers. Otherwise they would not have let the bills drag this long and risk a downgrade. I don't know whether the Christmas spirit would do the trick, especially on the senators. At least the House is poised to approve three or four measures, but these have bogged down in the Senate.

* * *

The media were invited last week to hear the results of the 18th annual survey of multinational companies (MNCs) conducted by the Wallace Business Forum. The interesting thing was that the answers provided by various MNCs doing business here to the 2004 survey were, as WBF president Peter Wallace pointed out, "essentially unchanged" after 17 earlier surveys. For instance, the strengths of the investment climate were the same, centering mainly on its best resources, its people. Queried on their "least problematic operating issues," the MNCs replied, in the order of importance: skilled labor availability; access to and cost of local funds; cost of production; competition from local goods; and cost of labor. The MNCs rated highly the Filipino workers' education level, their English language capability, the quality and quantity of middle management and technical people, the comfortable local lifestyle and the availability of skilled/semi-skilled labor. The one bright spot was the labor aspect, where the MNCs gave their best rating in the past 18 years. In fact, for the first time, 100 percent of the companies without unions agreed that their relations with their employees were amicable, praising their loyalty. In the past three years, only one company with a union reported a strike. In this latter aspect, I think the Arroyo administration should be credited for being *nakatutok*.

* * *

On their "most problematic operating issues," the MNCs listed declining margins, market growth/size, excessive tax rates, competition from lower-priced substitutes, e.g., cheap imports from China, and high cost of energy. Queried on RP's "major investment disadvantages," they listed, in the order of importance: corruption; consistency of policies; political instability; peace and order/security problems, and economic instability. All of which had to do with governance.

Unfortunately, in the MNCs' estimation, RP's weaknesses outweighed its strengths, so that the index of investment attractiveness fell from 63.7 in 2003 to 62.2 this year. This decrease was reflected in the increase of the negative attitude of their head offices abroad toward increasing investments here. But the MNCs also gave recommendations for attracting more investments: "clear, effective and consistent policies; strong enforcement of laws; an even playing field; no changing of the rules in mid-stream, and honoring and respecting contracts." They also mentioned "minimizing judicial intervention in legitimate business operations."

Effective governance is something that can be worked at, but as Wallace puts it, why aren't the reforms being put in place? Governance involves both the executive and the legislative branches, for at this point the key to RP's fiscal recovery clearly is in hands of the legislature.

* * *

Last year, members of Maryknoll College High School Class of 1980 brainstormed for a silver jubilee project that would enable them to have a lot of fun and bonding while raising funds for a project to help empower underprivileged women. A classmate from New York offered to write about how she retired after 12 years in banking to sail around the world with her husband, whom she had met in a sailing class. Over the next few months, 28 women e-mailed to one another essays from Manila, London, Dusseldorf, and various US and Asian cities, sharing intimate details about their lives and personal experiences, e.g., battles fought in corporate boardrooms, in bedrooms and in the hidden caverns of their psyches. Alternately poignant, hilarious, painful and wise, the 30-odd essays ended up in an anthology, titled "Speak Up, Woman!" sponsored by Dove and launched two months ago. It was edited by New York-based writer Marivi Soliven Blanco, who describes her classmates as "indomitable survivors, unfazed by life's trials and proud of our triumphs." The cover design and illustrations were done by Benjor Catindig of Creative 2.0. For copies, call or text Malu del Rosario, 0917-790-8446 or e-mail speakupwoman@yahoo.com.

Teens, sex and parenthood

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TALKING about sex and teenagers is like shouting "Fire!" in a crowded movie house, American columnist Ellen Goodman once wrote. Acknowledging their children's sexuality can be a painful wrench for parents, who must from that moment surrender their illusions about their children's innocence. Indeed, every parent's nightmare is to be told by one's adolescent child that she is pregnant, or that he has gotten some girl pregnant. Even if intellectually parents know that there is no way they can monitor their child's every move and be entirely responsible for his or her behavior, a child's untimely motherhood or fatherhood still provokes overwhelming feelings of guilt, shame and self-recrimination. Indeed, in this case, the "sins" of the child are visited upon the parent.

The current talk of the town, or at least of the segment that takes show business gossip seriously, is the pregnancy of actress and TV host Rosanna Roces' 15-year-old daughter, with the actor-son of Sen. Bong Revilla, himself an actor, as the "culprit."

What struck me about the interviews with both Roces and Lani Mercado, mother of the father-to-be, was that, while Roces was all calm assurance and support for her daughter, it was Mercado who was shedding tears and expressing remorse and regret at her son's early fatherhood.

This flies in the face of the conventional view. Usually, teen-age pregnancy is seen as primarily the girl's—and the girl's parents'—problem. It is the girl and her parents who must bear the greater share of the emotional and even physical and material burden. Not only is it the girl who must go through nine months of pregnancy and hours of labor (and given her youth, who must put her life on the line as well), it is also she who bears much of the shame, blame and sacrifice.

* * *

HOW often have we heard parents of boys declare, for instance, that they have nothing to worry about their sons' sex education since the boys "will not be the ones getting pregnant"? As if pregnancy were the only unwanted consequence of casual, unprotected sex.

And how often does it happen that when a pair of high school students confront an unwanted pregnancy, it is the girl who must stop schooling and even go into hiding, while the boy continues with his usual activities, like nothing happened? The argument of school officials is that a pregnant teen walking the halls of school is a constant "bad example" to other students who might be tempted to emulate her. But what of the young father? Is he not, by blithely carrying on as if he didn't face new and serious responsibilities, also setting a "bad example" to his peers?

Indeed, this was the case with the young celebrities. It was Roces' daughter who had to stop going to school, feeling her friends and classmates were gossiping about her. The young Revilla, as far as I know, continued with his usual activities, including an active career on TV. As the interviews revealed, his parents even requested Roces to keep her daughter away from public view, mainly to protect the young Revilla's budding acting career.

* * *

I DO agree with Lani Mercado that it is still "wrong" and worrying for two adolescents to be taking on the responsibilities of parenthood at so early an age (both her son and Roces' daughter are to be parents at 16).

But I was gladdened, in some way, by Rosanna Roces' attitude—or at least the demeanor she displayed on "The Buzz"—that neither she nor her daughter had anything to be ashamed of. Instead, she chose to view the impending arrival of her grandson as a blessing, a gift, even.

Still, I noted that neither Roces nor Mercado, nor any of the hosts of "The Buzz" saw fit to mention contraceptives, or the need for sexually active young people to protect themselves from the unwanted consequences of early sexual activity, be it an unplanned pregnancy, a sexually transmitted infection, or heartbreak—on their part or their parents'. After all, such a situation need not have come to pass. While there is much to be said against 15-year olds engaging in sex, the situation need not have escalated into an unwanted, unplanned, mistimed pregnancy—and its consequences such as the interrupted schooling of the mother and the nipped-in-the-bud career of the father—if only the young people had known about and cared to use protection.

* * *

ALONGSIDE this bit of sizzling show-biz gossip are news bits about young mothers, most of them poor and ignorant, facing charges for their attempts to kill or abort the child in their wombs.

One mother expressed "shock" when, while sitting on a toilet seat after suffering stomach pains, she found a baby shooting out from her. Too late did she remember to catch the infant before it landed head-first in the toilet and then, fearing the baby dead, she tried to stuff it in a garbage bin.

The situation would have been funny were it not for the fact that the baby nearly died from its mother's ministrations, though fortunately neighbors rushed both mother and child to the hospital just in time. The TV news footage then showed a repentant young mother, now claiming to love the baby she had nearly killed.

How could someone be so ignorant or naïve? we might ask. The painful answer is that the clueless young mother is typical of young Filipinos, who as surveys show muddle along with little knowledge about sex and sexuality, given our reticence about such matters and the paranoia of moral guardians who feel sex education will produce a generation of *disgrasyadas*. News flash: Unless we change this situation of willed ignorance soon, we will be putting at risk even more such young mothers and their innocent, blameless offspring.

The Black Dahlia revisited

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

MURDER mystery buffs would know and recognize immediately who, what and where the Black Dahlia case is all about. It's one of those unsolved Los Angeles noir mysteries that everyone has his favorite theory about and that is so beloved of fans of movies like "Chinatown" or of stories by Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald. Crime writer Joseph Wambaugh has even made a documentary on the case. Another favorite of "noir" fans is James Elroy who wrote a 1987 book, "The Black Dahlia," theorizing as to the identity of her killer, but who now supports a new theory.

The name of the murdered girl was Elizabeth Short. She came to LA in 1943 from Massachusetts, another young woman with star lust in her eyes and ambitions to hit the big time. LA is great for that sort of scenario. For it to be repeated so often in real life is hard to believe.

Fans of Elroy and now Connolly ("The Concrete Blond," "City of Bones," "Void Moon," etc.) all know that LA is about the best place for murders. San Francisco isn't bad for ambience either, but LA is much better with its bleak echoes of tinsel-town and lost hopes. Elizabeth or Betty, all of 22, later nicknamed the Black Dahlia, was found like a broken doll on Leimert Park at the corner of 39th Street and Norton Avenue on Jan. 15, 1947. Her body was cut up in two parts and left 18 inches from the sidewalk. She'd been surgically bisected at the waist and drained of blood, washed clean and abandoned.

Now comes an ex-cop called Steve Hodel who's written a national bestseller, a 481-page opus, "Black Dahlia Avenger: A Genius for Murder," wherein he accuses his own father of being the murderer.

Dr. George Hodel was a doctor with connections to corrupt cops and the city's powerful because of detailed files he kept at his downtown venereal disease clinic and information he had of an illegal abortion ring catering to the elite. He died at the age of 91 in San Francisco and his son George then found among his father's private photo album two photographs of a woman he believes to be the Black Dahlia. Apparently his dad was a real lothario who had dozens of girlfriends, married thrice and fathered 11 children.

The surgical bisection of the victim made it plausible that the killer was a doctor because no bones were severed. There were actually 50 people who confessed to the killing and the police at the time even suspected Orson Welles, among others, merely because he did a magic act where he cut a woman in half.

Actually Dr. Hodel had been one of the suspects but sadly enough, the 13 taunting notes that the killer sent police and the media that could have proven his son's accusation have disappeared from the file. As a matter of fact it seems that almost all the physical evidence has disappeared. LA County prosecutor Stephen Kay finds it shocking that key physical evidence has disappeared from the LAPD although copies of the letters appear to have the same handwriting as the doctor's.

But the case will never be closed since murder has no statute of limitation. The case was actually investigated by the district attorney who turned over copies of its files to the LAPD, including a photograph of Dr. Hodel and even transcripts of conversations recorded inside his house, including one from Feb. 18, 1950 where he says: "Suppposin' I did kill the Black Dahlia. They couldn't prove it now. They can't talk to my secretary anymore because she's dead." The secretary is listed in 1945 as a suicide and police suspect that the doctor might have killed her.

The recordings are interesting in that a woman is heard crying as she tries to call the operator. There are also sounds of digging and a shovel hitting a pipe. Five minutes later, the microphones record a woman's scream and two minutes after that a second scream.

The police apparently didn't bring in Dr. Hodel for questioning. Some questions come to mind: Why did they set up the microphones? And why didn't they bring him in for questioning?

Dr. Hodel was no ordinary man. He had an I.Q. of 186, entered Caltech at 15 but was expelled for having fathered a child with a faculty member's wife. His career included being a crime reporter for the Los Angeles Record, a magazine publisher, a radio announcer, a medical student, a doctor and chief venereal disease control officer for the Los Angeles County. He also drank, used hashish and cocaine and maybe even stronger drugs. He also had a good friend in photographer Man Ray. Both believed in Dadaist nonconformist conventions.

Steve Hodel believes his father murdered several women. According to the DA's files, Betty Short was one of George Hodel's girlfriends. Another girlfriend claimed she had seen her in his house.

Now comes the entertaining part for us. In 1950, George Hodel left LA for Hawaii where he stayed a year and then moved to Manila where he established himself as a successful market researcher with a new family and four children. Just think if you had been his next door neighbor or played golf with him or entertained him in your home! He returned to the US after 40 years, moving to San Francisco in 1990.

The question is, if he was the killer why did he kill the Black Dahlia and who else (aside from his secretary) did he kill?

* * *

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

Unexplained wealth, explained poverty

YOUNG BLOOD

Rowena La Torre

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

GOING by some journalists' accounts, corruption in the military is an open secret. Aside from the *"pabaon"* given to a retiring army chief of staff which allegedly amounts to hundreds of million of pesos, there is the *"pasalubong"* which is received by the high-ranking official upon assuming the position.

It is disturbing to know that although this has been happening for so long, it has been made public only recently. Why only now when millions might have already been pocketed by former AFP comptrollers other than retired Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia and his cohorts?

I can understand why. Pinning down a big name and gathering evidence to substantiate an exposé is such a daunting, almost impossible task that it leaves the reporter little choice but to keep the information to himself. People in the know refuse to talk; some out of fear, and others out of indifference. It seems as if the culture of corruption has made some of us callous. Many of us do not realize that turning a blind eye on corruption is as bad as being corrupt itself.

When you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. Corruption is so rampant that we should be reminded that it does not make a wrong right if everybody is doing it.

Before he retired as Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Narciso Abaya proposed that the comptrollership be handled by civilians. He seemed to have forgotten that civilians can, and do, get close to military officers they work with. What we need for the job is someone imbued with the noble intention of serving the country and not robbing it of its resources. It takes a man with a pure heart and a strong character to hold this post, an incorruptible soul, who can resist temptation and be firm enough to go against the tide.

Private companies and other government agencies are not free of corruption, so what difference will it make to put civilians in the office of comptrollership? Every institution has its bad eggs. This does not mean we cannot find anyone in the military who is suitable for the post.

Hidden by the glare of publicity on the Garcia case are many if less dramatic stories of military officials living modest lives. The recent confirmation hearings conducted by the Commission on Appointments produced stories like those of Col. Alfredo Andres, Brig. Gen. Anastacio Salud and Col. Ramiro Busalanan which are likely to be soon forgotten. Andres, for one, admitted that he had allowed his wife to sell banana cue and *ukay-ukay* goods because his income from the military was not enough to pay for the medical bills of their child afflicted with a heart disease.

It is not for me to glorify poverty and condemn affluence. I believe anyone can go ahead and get rich as long as he employs honest means and he can account for every centavo he possesses. Earning money is a legitimate concern. Military officials, like the rest of us, have their family's future to worry about. What is unacceptable is making money through illegal means.

Military men are not prohibited from engaging in legitimate businesses. Although they are on call 24 hours a day, that is not an excuse for wrongdoing especially in connection with the performance of their sworn duties. When they engage in corrupt activities they tarnish the military institution and bring dishonor upon the Filipino soldier.

In the military familiarity does not breed contempt but corruption. The closeness between the comptroller and the chief of staff makes it easy to realign funds. For instance, Garcia claims that all the deals concluded by J-6 during his tenure were approved by his bosses. Was he perhaps covering up for his higher-ups when he invoked his right against self incrimination during the hearings at the House of Representatives? Has he been assured that if he does not spill the beans on his superiors, he can avoid being penalized heavily?

The "revolving door" policy did not extend to the comptrollership, which is obviously a vital part of the Armed Forces. Granting that Garcia acted alone, it is hard to believe that during the four years he was in J-6 five chiefs of staff found no reason to doubt the integrity of the transactions being made there? So much for military intelligence.

Lt. Gen. Efren Abu, the new AFP chief of staff, ought to be commended for having the courage to institute reforms, beginning with the abolition of J-6. He is sticking his neck out with the plan to create four separate departments to handle the tasks being performed by J-6 and putting them all under under his office. With this set-up, Abu assumes responsibility over the offices of comptrollership, internal audit, resource and management, and accounting. This arrangement will ensure a more rigorous system of checks and balances.

Abu also deserves praise for his willingness to serve as chief of staff at this critical juncture in the AFP's history when the first military general ever is facing court martial.

This is a trying time for the military. This is a time when an institution that is known for instilling discipline among its members is being tested to determine whether it can really discipline one of its own who has gone astray. For its own sake (as well as for ours) let us hope it will prove equal to the challenge.

Rowena La Torre, 23, is taking her master's at the Ateneo de Manila University and works as a writer for a television news program.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

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LETTERS

Unrestrained voices of truth

THERE are at present 243 political prisoners in the Philippines. Their crimes—they brought light to the lives of impoverished people, defended the weak from the powerful and helped the voiceless to shatter their silence. In fact, their stories have dispelled an illusion, showing the world what we really have—a democracy that thrives on sheer lies. This reminds me of the story of Franz Kafka's "The Trial."

It's an illuminating story where the main character wakes up one day to find himself the purpose of a trial. He doesn't know his crime. In fact, neither does anyone—from the arresting officers to the court officials, including the judge. All they know is that if he is under court trial, he must be guilty of something. Until the end of the story, the main character never gets to know what his crime is, and he himself gets to be curious about his own guilt.

The cases of the political prisoners attest that Kafka's "The Trial" is still happening in real life. But more than this, the story touches our lives and is a grim reminder of the repression and injustice paradoxically happening beneath the purported civility of a modern society.

Like the main character in The Trial, the political prisoners are accused of crimes. What crimes? Their crimes are that they fought with kin and friends who would not let the truth die with them and for the common people who raised their fists to fight for their rights. Their crimes, like that of the late Ninoy Aquino and Jose Diokno, are that they defended the people from state repression, they tried to remove the yoke of injustice from our people's shoulders, and they fought for social change.

In the political prisoners, we find men and women who bear witness to repression, tortures and massacres; and out of conviction they fought for social change, and now they languish in jails accused of criminal offenses. This is an attempt to obscure the suppression of political dissenters in the country.

According to the records of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), out of the 243 political prisoners, seven are elderly, eight are minor, seven are sickly, and six are women. With imprisonment, these voices of truth echo more loudly, unrestrained even by prison walls. Their aspirations for justice and social change will definitely live forever in our midst.

—JERBERT M. BRIOLA,
regional coordinator,
TFDP-Southern Luzon,
29 S. Osmeña St.,
Brgy. Uno, Lucena City

Resignation would be an honorable act

LABOR Assistant Secretary Jeffrey Cortazar's frenetic explanations to get his boss, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, off the hook over the use of AFP personnel in the gory dispersal of picketers in the ignominious Hacienda Luisita massacre (PDI, 11/25/04) have only buried the embattled labor secretary deeper into the quagmire.

To justify his boss' action of calling on the Armed Forces of the Philippines to perform the manifestly civilian function of crowd control, Cortazar cited a provision in the 1996 guidelines which states: "Unless requested by the President or personally by the chairman of the National Police Commission upon consultation with the Secretary of Labor and Employment or when requested by the latter, personnel from the Armed Forces should not intervene or be utilized in any labor dispute."

Anybody with a modicum knowledge of the English language will see that the above provision gives the power to utilize AFP personnel during labor disputes to only two officials: the President, and the chairman of the Napolcom. The labor secretary may be consulted by these two officials on the matter. She may also request them to make the call for the utilization of AFP personnel. There is nothing in the above-quoted provision, however, allowing her to directly order such AFP utilization or intervention.

There is also the 1987 Constitution to consider. The Constitution gives the President—not the labor secretary—the power to call on the armed forces, as its commander in chief, to prevent or suppress lawlessness, violence, invasion or rebellion. While the Labor Code authorizes the labor secretary to seek the assistance of law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with her orders during strikes and lock-outs, this clearly refers to the Philippine National Police which is trained in crowd management and control, unlike the AFP personnel whose orientation is primarily for combat and warfare.

Cortazar was quick to imply that the workers' strike is illegal even if the labor secretary, who assumed jurisdiction over the strike, has yet to rule on this issue. As the alter ego of Sto. Tomas, Cortazar is presumed to speak for his boss. Given the obvious prejudgment, it would do well for Sto. Tomas to inhibit herself from the case.

On the other hand, whether or not the labor secretary was legally authorized to call on the AFP does not detract from the fact that her decision to make use of AFP personnel in the Hacienda Luisita dispute led to the death of a number of workers and picketers and the injury of others more. No amount of legal justifications from the labor secretary and her lackeys would bring back to life the strikers and picketers who unnecessarily perished in the Hacienda Luisita carnage.

Given such a situation, there is only one honorable thing for the labor secretary to do: resign.

REMIGIO D. SALADERO JR.,
Pro-Labor Legal Assistance Center,
33-B E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave.,
Quezon City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Total deforestation of upland areas by 2005

TBAK joins the nation and all concerned agencies in extending assistance to all victims of devastation wrought by the latest typhoons especially in Bicol, Aurora, Quezon and Nueva Ecija. Tbak calls on its members nationwide to send relief goods to the Ecpat office at 123 V. Luna Ext., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City. You can also text or contact Boy at 09274360179 or Dok at 09178227637.

Tbak, however, deplores the continued inaction of government against indiscriminate big-time logging in critical areas of the country, such as, Aurora, Quirino, Quezon, Isabela, Samar Island, Agusan, Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte.

Footages of landslides and rampaging waters from the mountains in these areas reveal tons of logs cut from the forests, showing the unabated destruction of some of the country's remaining watersheds and old growth forests.

Studies reveal that the rate of destruction of our forests at 1,900 hectares (4,695 acres) a day, will likely completely denude by 2025 our upland areas, resulting in disasters and loss of lives far more than what happened in Ormoc and Northern Quezon.

Tbak calls on the government to strengthen laws against indiscriminate big-time logging, enact appropriate and useful forestry laws, enforce current policies on illegal logging and protected areas, encourage community participation in guarding the forest, and in prosecuting errant government personnel who violate forestry laws.

Tbak also calls on Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to initiate action against big-time logging in such critical watershed areas, including against some officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who may have been in collusion with illegal loggers. The logs and timber that were carried by the floodwaters should be allocated to victims of the disaster who lost their houses.

—ABRAHAM BALADAD JR., chair, Tbak,
Alumni Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City

Chauffeured nuns and priests

ALLOW me a brief rejoinder on a couple of points raised by "running priest" Fr. Robert Reyes. (Letters, 12/07/04) It should be pointed out to Father Reyes that GSIS president Winston Garcia can drive any car he wants and live in any house he chooses as long as he does not steal money to buy them.

I understand that Garcia took out loans to buy the car and build the house. Now, since when did borrowing money become illegal or immoral? Also, what's wrong if the mother of Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes entrusted her money to her son, since she can no longer manage them in her twilight years?

I find it more nauseating that many priests and nuns live grandly—chauffeured and treating themselves to fine dining experiences—in violation of their vow of poverty.

Father Reyes should be more circumspect before passing judgment on people. Being a man of the cloth, he should know that he will be judged according to the manner he judges other people.

—NENITA VELASCO, 2164 Yakal St.,
United Hills Village I, Parañaque City

They will remain rice terraces

THIS is in reference to the Nov. 28 editorial cartoon of the INQUIRER, depicting the Banaue Rice Terraces turned into "marijuana terraces."

The controversy, triggered by the bill of our very own Rep. Solomon Chungalao, proposing to legalize the production of marijuana in the country, has brought Ifugao and the world-famous Banaue Rice Terraces in the media limelight once again.

While the Ifugao officials do not have a unified stand on the proposed marijuana legalization bill, we would like to bring to your attention that we, here in the mountains of Ifugao, feel humiliated by the cartoon.

Hard as it has been, the Ifugao farmers have meticulously maintained the terraces for generations with minimal subsistence—if there has been at all—from the government. This is the reason why tourists can still witness the planting and harvesting of farmers of their traditional rice varieties. The tradition still lives despite the odds we face.

And this is so because we respect the principles of our great Ifugao ancestors who, on their own ingenuity and free will, transformed—with only primitive tools and their bare hands—the rugged, harsh and steep mountains that served as their home into productive and beautiful rice terraces. For us, the rice terraces are a monument of the Ifugao's creative will to survive in a hostile environment.

While we do not deny the existence of marijuana in Ifugao, we can say that there are no marijuana plantations in the terraces. Marijuana is usually propagated in remote areas but not in the Banaue Rice Terraces or in any of the rice terraces in the province.

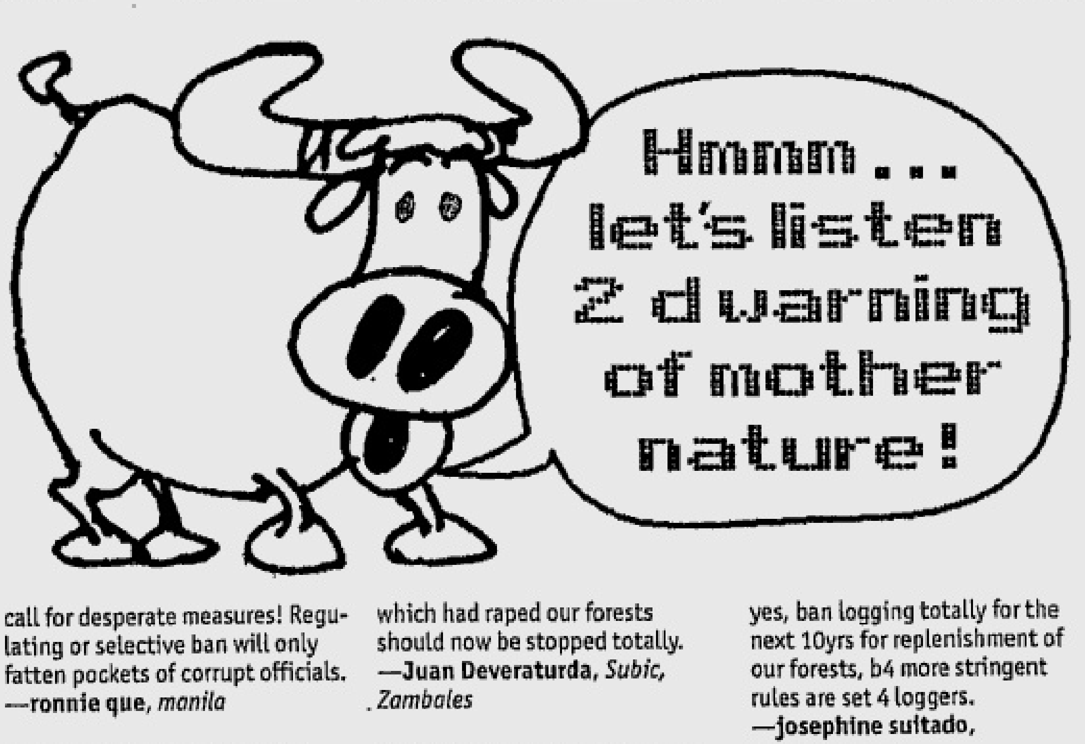
Our people are hard up, feeling the pangs of wretched indigence. We may belong to the poorest provinces, but we have never entertained the thought of planting the rice terraces with marijuana.

We would like to assure the people of the Philippines that we, the Ifugao people, stewards of the great Ifugao rice terraces—the Filipino's legacy to the world—shall protect our heritage. Whether marijuana is legalized or not, we will never turn our cherished rice terraces into marijuana plantations. That much we owe to our ancestors and to our children.

—GLENN D. PRUDENCIANO,
provincial vice governor,
Province of Ifugao, Lagawe, Ifugao

INBOX

Dear Readers, Text us your comments, suggestions and views on today's news or how it was delivered. Tell us about the news you are interested in and the things you want improved in your favorite newspaper. Text INQUIRER <section keyword> name/city/message and send to 283 (Smart) or 2207 (Globe). The section keywords are indicated in the logo of each section.


Hmmm ... let's listen 2 dwarning of mother nature!

Do you think commercial logging should be totally banned? Why or why not?

No, not yet 4 the time being. Let there be another storm and let the houses of the honorable (people in Congress) be hit by gigantic logs.
—Noel b. Madrid, *sta.maria, bulacan*

commercial logging shuld not be totally banned. paano na ang mga maggarbong pamumuhay ng mga politicians and govt officials?
—Leymhan Lanzuela, *Quiapo, Manila*

commercial logging should be banned because desperate times call for desperate measures! Regulating or selective ban will only fatten pockets of corrupt officials.
—ronnie que, *manila*

commercial or not, it's still logging. Total log ban and nothing else!
—divina lopez, *davao city*

n0, bcuz if we totally ban c0mercial logging then a lot of businesses wil shut d0wn and th0usands will lose their jobs.
—luke eduard ensong, *bayawan city*

Both legal and illegal logging which had raped our forests should now be stopped totally.
—Juan Deveraturda, *Subic, Zambales*

Yes! Commercial logging, shud be totally banned, d best remedy 2 save d remaining forest n living species.
—Antonio Taguinod, *Antipolo City*

sapagkat ang ibang sektor ng gobyerno ang nagpasimuno ng illegal logging at isa pa, dahil sa kapabayaan ng mga batas.
—Sheila Jumuad, *General Santos City*

yes, ban logging totally for the next 10yrs for replenishment of our forests, b4 more stringent rules are set 4 loggers.
—josephine sultado, *muntinlupa city*

no. Because people who have connections to them will always do something in order to gain money for themselves.
—albino Ly, *tuguegarao city*

YES to a total log ban! Obviously, time has come after logging concessions that used 2 guard the land had left, & FOREST is eventually DENUDED, people are affected.
—Casiana Delfin, *Davao*

No. Commercial logging is d source of livelihood for many Filipinos. The government shud just have stricter rules, and stick to dem.
—Gail Genevieve Ang, *Quezon City*

Regulated logging shud b allowed 2 small enterprise assigned species.
—arnulfo cajegas, *borongan, Eastern Samar*

No, it shuld only b selective. 2 dos who have private forest plantation, dey have d right 2 harvest what dey have sown.
—jeric ahat, *zamboanga city*

NOT totally bAN. cguro selectiVe logging coz we neeD wood. d imPORTant thing is wen we cuT trees, it shud be replaCEd by planting again.
—Vilmalen Temblor, *kidapawan city*

yes naman to a total log ban, logging will cause soil erosion & floods, like what happened to Leyte before, and now, in parts of Luzon, kawawa ang mamamayan na.
—ralph deocos, *davao city*

yes. a ban will encourage individuals to plant trees and become the suppliers in man-made wood in the future.
—eutiquio lumayag, *tagbilaran city*

dapat lang! May ibang trabaho naman, bakit commercial logging pa? I hate 2 see history repeat itself!
—breisa moralde, *cagayan de oro city*

It depends on d government officials, if they are sincere.
—Edwin G. Iglupas, *Iligan City*

yes! we have 2 ban logging totally, or we will all be phased-out of d face of the Earth. STOP D WORLD, I WANT to GET OFF is the cry of day.
—elmer Guevara, *urdaneta city*

BAN all logging until the enactment of a viable, ENFORCIBLE plan that covers both economic & more so, the environmental parameters.
—rene locsin, *QC*

YES! wHat we are doing 2 d earth is reflected in our beings. IF mother nature is sick, so are we who live within her!
—elmer Guevara, *urdaneta city*

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Exec's kin seek honors for hero cop

COTABATO CITY—The family of a slain Maguindanao official wants the Philippine National Police hierarchy to commend a policeman here, who tried to rescue the victim after being shot Sunday by still unidentified armed men.

Noting that the local Muslim community had not been oriented on rescue of victims of shooting, Chief Insp. Abdulwahid Pidtukasan, city police chief, admitted that PO3 Bazhar Kasan's act was something "rarely seen or has not happened here in decades."

Talitay, Maguindanao acting Mayor Saidamen Midtimbang was driving his family home after dinner at a local restaurant here when four motorcycle-riding men ambushed the pickup truck they were riding in.

Saidamen's wife Hadja Sittie managed to grab her husband's 9-millimeter automatic pistol and fire at the motorcycle-riding assailants. Hadja Sittie was also slightly wounded in the cheek.

It was the burst of gunfire, Kasan said, that called his attention to the crime scene from a nearby reunion meeting of the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity and sorority, of which he is a member.

Pidtukasan said Kasan rushed Saidamen to the Notre Dame Hospital here, using the victim's pickup truck. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Foresters charge phone firm exec with cutting 200 trees

DUPAX DEL NORTE, Nueva Vizcaya—Environment officials here have accused an executive of a telecommunications firm of allegedly illegally cutting 223 trees in a forest zone in upland Kasibu town.

Forester Romualdo Villador, community environment officer, recommended the filing of charges against Joselito San Luis, area acquisition specialist of Globe Telecoms.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources personnel recovered some 5,000 board feet of timber and tree saplings along a cleared trail leading to a proposed relay station at Barangay Macalong in Kasibu.

The DENR filed the suit after Globe Telecom defied a Sept. 13 warning to cease clearing the area and to get a cutting permit.

We cannot afford another environmental disaster," Villador said.

The cut timber was being used as construction materials for the relay station.

Globe Telecom was being asked to pay the government P401,000 as forest charges and for environmental damages, Villador said.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach San Luis. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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NO TO CASINO IN BINONDO

An Open Letter to Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

"It is not the question of what is legal, it is a question of what is morally upright and morally sound."-PGMA

The Kilusan Kontra Sugalan urgently appeals to you, Madam President, to immediately stop the operation of the casino at the Binondo Suites situated at the corner of Sabino Padilla and Ongpin Streets, Binondo, City of Manila.

Last November 28, 2004, PAGCOR had a "soft-opening" of the casino, despite vehement protest by all the important organizations in the Chinese-Filipino community, the nationwide Chinese Catholic apostolate, and the Sta. Cruz Parish.

We have made known to Pagcor and to the Binondo Suites, our firm and non-negotiable stand against organized gambling in any guise or form - whether slot machine arcades, gaming parlors, e-casinos, internet gaming and the like - in the Binondo and Sta. Cruz areas.

The grounds for our objection to the casino are many and have been effectively brought to the attention of both the Pagcor and Binondo Suites. The bottomline is: we do not want such a historic and symbolic place as Binondo, the heart of the Chinese-Filipino community for generations, to be polluted by organized gambling and to suffer from all its evil consequences.

For this reason, we urge your Excellency to take action NOW and stop the operation of the casino at the Binondo Suites, even if euphemistically called a VIP Club. That they have since supposedly closed the casino again a few days ago is also immaterial, we want the slot machines completely pulled out so there will be no doubt as to whether it is operational or not.

We appeal to you to maintain the Binondo and Sta. Cruz areas free of any form of organized gambling. Your office has the power and must use that power for the common good. Your legacy to the Filipinos must be upheld.

Now is the time to take action and restore the people's confidence in the moral vision of your administration.

KILUSAN KONTRA SUGALAN
December 7, 2004

SIGNATORIES:
1. Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc.
2. Chinese Filipino Business Club Inc.
3. Association of Chinese-Filipino Schools in the Philippines
4. Grand Family Association of the Philippines, Inc.
5. Filipino Chinese Amateur Athletic Federation
6. Federation of Filipino-Chinese Association of the Philippines, Inc.
7. Association of Philippine Volunteer Fire Brigades, Inc.
8. Association of Volunteer Fire Chiefs and Fire Fighters of the Philippines Inc.
9. Filipino-Chinese Women's Association
10. Philippine Federation of Filipino Cantonese Association, Inc.
11. Sta. Cruz Parish
12. Kalsa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc.
13. Miguel Valera
14. Sergio Ortiz-Luis
15. Donald Dee

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER:
16. Ai Shin Academy
17. Binan Volunteer Fire Brigade
18. Binondo Catholic Parish
19. Binondo Volunteer Fire Brigade, Inc.
20. Catholic Women's League
21. Central Station 7
22. Chee Kong Tong, Chinese Free Mason Lodge No. 2 in the Philippines Inc.
23. Chiang Kai Shek College
24. China Airlines, Roxas Blvd.
25. Chinese Commercial News
26. Chinese Filipino Apostolate:
    Alay Sa Diyos Community
    Binondo Chinese Parish
    Cebu Parish
    China Office Xavier School
    Immaculate Conception Academy
    Kong Hua School-Cagayan de Oro
    Mary the Queen Parish
    Our Lady of Fatima Church-Naga City
    Queen of Peace Church
    Resurrection of the Lord-Iligan City
    Sacred [illegible]
    Sa[illegible]-Cebu
    [illegible] School for Girls-Cebu City
    St. Jude Archdiocese Shrine
    St. Jude Catholic School-Legaspi
    St. Jude Catholic School-Manila
    St. Peter Ladies Circle
    St. Peter the Apostle School
    St. Therese Parish- Dagupan City
    Xavier School
27. Citizens Action Against Crime
28. CKSC Pyrmids '94 Alumni Foundation, Inc.
29. C.W.L., Quiapo
30. Divine Mercy Learning Center
31. Divisoria Volunteer Fire Brigade
32. Eng Bee Tin Chinese Deli
33. Feati University
34. Federation of Filipino-Chinese Catholic Women
35. Filipino Chinese Amity Club, Inc.
36. Filipino-Chinese Cultural and Economic Association
37. Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business and Professional Women of the Philippines
38. Filipino-Chinese Shi Shi Townmate Association
39. Friends and Alumni of Lorenzo Ruiz Academy
40. Food for the Hungry International/Phils., Inc.
41. Gideon Academy
42. Glastar Composite Panels Corporation
43. Golden Palace Restaurant
44. Hope Christian High School
45. Jeepney Shopping Center
46. Jose Abad Santos [illegible] Scho.
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48. Knights of Columbus
49. Kong Han Athletic Club
50. La Croesus Pharma Inc, Laguna
51. Lakpue Group of Companies, Inc.
52. Lorenzo Ruiz Crusaders Academy
53. Manila Chinatown Barangay Association
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55. Manila Chinese Press Club
56. Manila Downtown YMCA
57. Manila Patriotic School
58. Manila Sampaloc Hui Hua Siong Hue
59. Manila Sampaloc Tiong O Tang Su Hue
60. Merchant Hotel
61. Merry Angels School
62. Movement for Restoration of Peace and Order
63. Multicolor Exhibitors Association, Inc.
64. Northern Rizal Yorklin School
65. Novaliches Volunteer Fire Brigade
66. Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary
67. Paco-Binondo Volunteer Fire Brigade
68. Parish Pastoral Council-Binondo
69. Parish Pastoral Council-Sta. Cruz
70 Parish Youth Council
71 Philadelphia School
72. Philippine Academy of Sakya
73. Philippine Association of Mason Club
74. Philippine Buddhacare Academy
75. Philippine Cantonese Women's Association, Inc.
76. Philippine Cultural High School Alumni Association
77. Philippine Jin Nan Institute
78. Philippine Ling Nam Athletic Federation
79. Philippine Ling Nam Volunteer Fire Fighters
80. Philippine Maritime Institute Colleges
81. Philippine Se Ho Tong Family Association
82. Philippine San Bin School
83. Philippine Su Kuang Institute
84. Philippine Sun Yat Sen High School
85 Philippine Sy Tiok Songlim Musical Federation Association
86. Philippine Tiok Lim Grand Mason Incorporated
87. Philippine Tiong Se Academy
88. Philippine Tiong Se Academy Alumni Association
89. Philippine Volunteer Fire Brigades, Inc.
90. President Restaurant
91. Progressive Mason Club, Inc.
92. Samson Rd. Group
93. Solor Volunteer Fire Brigade
94. St. Stephen's High School
95. St. Stephen's High School Parents Swimming Team
96. Strata Suites
97. Top Master Metal Corp.
98. Traders Travel Corporation
99. Trans-World Paper Corporation
100. United Asia International Plastic
101. Wha Chi Veterans Association

ADVT

NPA launches 2nd offensive in 3 days

MEXICO, Pampanga—For the second time in three days, New People's Army rebels attacked a government military intelligence safehouse in Barangay Nasangsang here on Sunday.

No one was reported killed in the attack by at least 20 rebels but several firearms were reportedly seized.

The NPA's Palermo Ortañez Command, which owned up the attack on Monday, said the raid was staged weeks after local officials received complaints on the presence of government soldiers in the town's eastern villages.

The rebels seized three M-16 rifles, an M-203 grenade launcher, two computers, two cell phones, a global positioning system unit and uniforms of soldiers stationed at the tactical command post of the 69th Infantry Battalion, the Northern Luzon Command said in a statement.

Of the 20 rebels, four wore Army uniforms and patches of the 69th IB, the unit assigned to Pampanga and Tarlac, the statement said.

At gunpoint, two soldiers were locked in the toilet. They were left unhurt.

The rebels fled to Sta. Ana town, east of Mexico, on board a van. The attack took less than 20 minutes, according to a worker at the command post.

The raid was the second in three days following an NPA announcement that it would intensify its attacks to avenge the death of Tarlac's farm leader Marcelino Beltran.

Beltran was supposedly one of the witnesses to the shooting of protesters by military men during operations to dismantle a barricade put up by workers on strike at the Hacienda Luisita.

The rebels vowed to make the perpetrators of Beltran's murder pay and said his killing was connected to the Luisita labor conflict.

On Friday, the NPA raided a police detachment in Subic, Zambales, to start what it called "the offensive against the escalating use of state terrorism on the Filipino people." *Tonette Orejas and Jo Clemente, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Case vs fotog slay suspect filed in court

CEBU CITY—The city prosecutor's office here yesterday elevated to the regional trial court the murder charges against the alleged gunman in the killing of photojournalist Allan Dizon.

Cebu City Prosecutor Cezar Tajanlangit approved the resolution of Assistant City Prosecutor Edilberto Ensomo who found probable cause to indict Edgar Belandres for Dizon's murder.

Aside from the murder complaint, Belandres, 39, is also facing charges of violating the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, with two others identified as Mariano Villarin and Gaudencio Perales.

The three were arrested on Dec. 6 after policemen allegedly caught them holding a pot session inside Belandres' house at Sitio Itom Yota in Barangay Lorega this city.

The prosecutor's office recommended no bail for murder charges and P40,000 for the charges of possession of illegal drug paraphernalia.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Central Visayas (CIDG-7) filed a murder complaint against Belandres after two witnesses identified him as the one who shot Dizon thrice on the street outside SM City here on Nov. 27.

Dizon, 30 and a photographer of the Freeman Newspaper, was the 12th journalist killed this year and the 61st since 1986, based on the records compiled by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

Ensomo told the INQUIRER that he based his resolution on the evidence presented by the CIDG, which included the affidavits of their witnesses.

"Based on the evidence presented to us there is sufficient basis to file the case in court. There are at least two witnesses who identified the suspect," he said. *Jolene R. Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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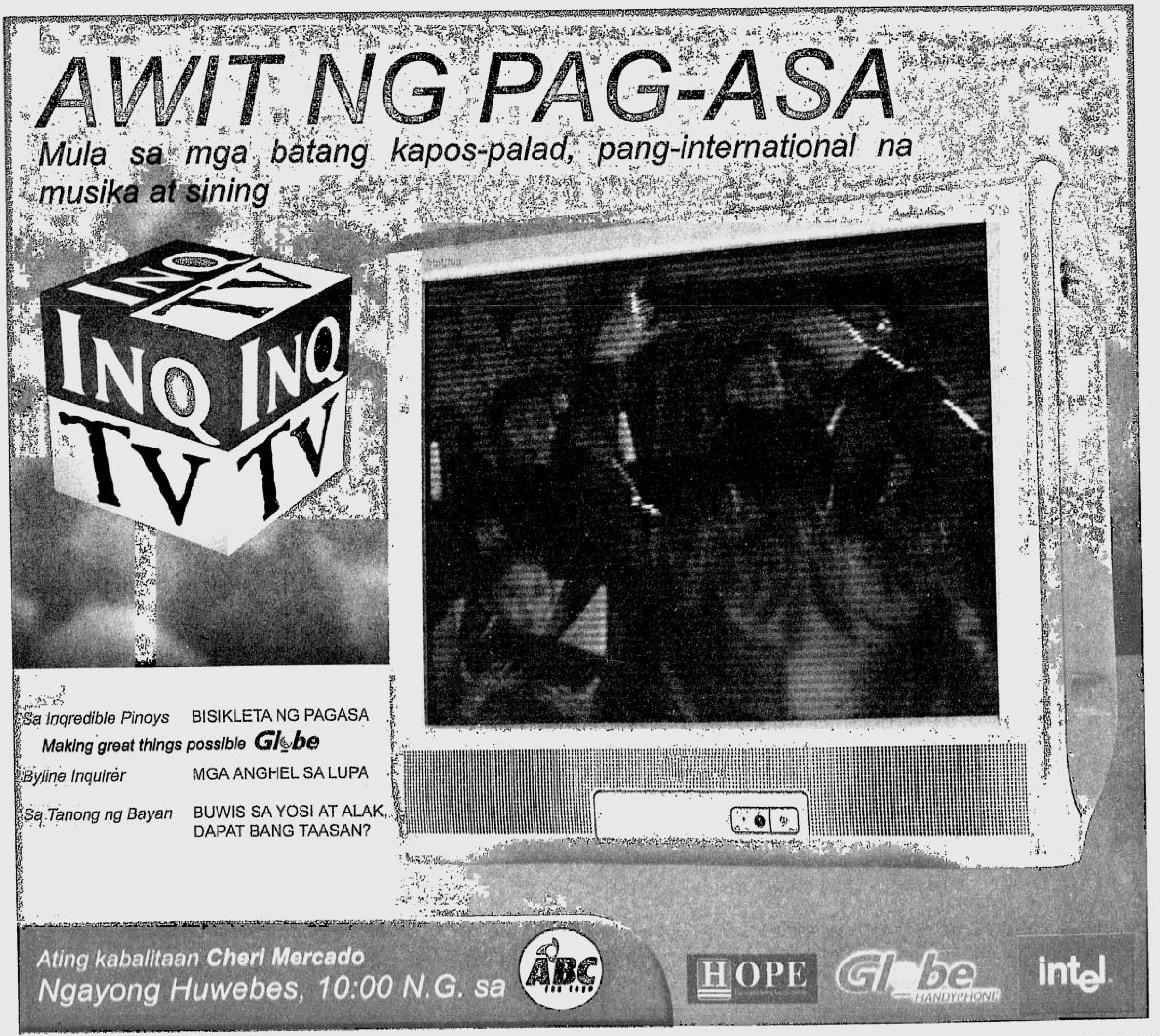
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Mayors of Bulacan towns deny diverting educational funds

CITY OF MALOLOS—Bulacan mayors have denied diverting their towns' special education fund contributions to their campaign to win in the May 10 elections.

The alleged diversion has delayed the payment of salaries of teachers hired by the provincial government.

Mayor Felix Ople from Hagonoy, one of 10 towns identified by the provincial government that failed to remit their contributions, said no municipal government fund was used in the mayors' election campaigns.

Earlier, Gov. Josefina de la Cruz blamed the mayors for the failure of the teachers to receive their salaries on time. She said at least 10 towns have yet to remit P58 million from their real property tax collections.

She said she was forced to identify the town mayors to compel them to remit the towns' shares to the provincial treasurer's office so the provincial government could pay the teachers' salaries for November and December.

The mayors reportedly connived with the municipal treasurers in not remitting the towns' education fund contributions to finance their campaign expenses.

The provincial public affairs office identified the towns as Meycauayan, San Ildefonso, San Miguel, Paombong, Hagonoy, Bocaue, Norzagaray, Calumpit, Pulilan and Guiguinto.

While stressing that he could not speak for the other mayors, Ople said there could be some delays in the remittance but there could never be any irregularity in the towns' contributions to the fund.

He and Mayor Ambrosio Cruz of Guiguinto vowed to complete the payments before the end of this month.

During the campaign, De la Cruz was criticized for misuse of the funds. She has denied the accusations. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Gov't firm still owner of NLEx franchise

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp, remains the franchise owner of the North Luzon Expressway even with the takeover of the Manila North Tollways Corp., which rehabilitated the 84-km highway linking four Northern and Central Luzon regions to Metro Manila.

"The PNCC is a shareholder of the MNTC," MNTC vice president for public relations Marlene Ochoa said.

Aside from the PNCC, she said those in the joint venture are the Lopez Group-owned First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., Groupe Egis of France and Leighton International of Australia.

Ochoa issued the statement after Pampanga Board Member Tarcicio Halili questioned why the PNCC allowed the MNTC to take over the management of the NLEx when the former's franchise was to end in 2007.

Halili said only Congress could amend the franchise given under Presidential Decrees 1112 and 1113 issued by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

"PNCC declared that it alone could not raise the funding required to embark on such a massive project (of rehabitating the 30-year-old road) so President (Fidel) Ramos, in 1994, invited the Lopezes to partner with the PNCC," Ochoa said.

Co-owner

"It was not necessary for PNCC to give up its franchise because PNCC is a co-owner of the MNTC."

Under the project's supplemental toll operating agreement (STOA), MNTC was given a 30-year concession or until 2030. The STOA, according to MNTC reports, was approved by Ramos in 1998 and reviewed by the Department of Justice twice in 2000 and 2002.

This, the MNTC said, "attested to the legal soundness and enforceability of the STOA."

The project, which originally cost P11 billion, amounted to P18.3 billion funded through a 32 percent equity and 68 percent debt financing.

Of the 117.5 million cast equity, FPIDC put in 75.5 million; Egis, 19 million; Leighton, 19.4 million, and PNCC, 3.6 million.

PNCC has a 6-percent share of revenue, which the business and nongovernment organizations want the government to use as a subsidy for the new toll rates that are deemed high amid the economic crisis.

Opening rates have been pegged at P2.49 per km for cars, P6.23 for buses and light trucks, and P7.47 for heavy vehicles.

More increases

MNTC president Jose de Jesus said an additional increase of "a few centavos" is expected when MNTC takes over either in late December or early January.

The Dec. 15 deadline has not been met as the MNTC has yet to receive its certificate of substantial completion and apply for new toll rates.

The delay came as MNTC insisted that Leighton should redo some segments that were found "to have fallen below MNTC's strict quality standards," Ochoa said.

The provincial board of Pampanga is investigating the toll increase amid charges that it was excessive. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Quezon folk mourn deaths, forest loss

LUCENA CITY—At least 3,000 people marched on this city's streets to mourn the deaths brought by landslides and floods, walking as one in silence to also protest ecological destruction which they blamed for the tragedy.

Students, members of religious groups, professionals, farmers, workers and environmental protection advocates wore black shirts as a sign of mourning for their dead province mates and protest against continued logging in Quezon.

"We silently mourn the death of our province mates in northern Quezon. This is a time for prayer and meditation," said Fr. Raul Enriquez, chair of the Kapatiran at Alyansang Alay sa Kaunlarang Bayan-Quezon, the biggest coalition of different multi-sectoral groups in the province.

"But our silence does not mean that the culprits behind all these evil deeds will remain free. The government officials behind all these should be held liable for the gross negligence that resulted in the death of countless helpless people."

The group ended up at the doorsteps of the office of Quezon Gov. Wilfrido Enverga in front of the provincial capitol building.

They placed a mock coffin in front of the governor's office and prayed.

They proceeded to the session hall of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan to continue praying.

Enriquez urged Enverga to resign for his regular "absenteeism" every time calamities visited the province.

"He was nowhere to be found several days after the tragedy struck northern Quezon. He just appeared three days after, in time for President Macapagal's visit to the disaster area," the activist priest said.

The group also accused Enverga of forging anti-illegal logging records for political ends.

The governor was unavailable for comments.

Two years ago, Enverga formed the Task Force Reina to combat illegal logging in the northern Quezon portion of Sierra Madre.

The task force immediately reported the discovery of at least 3 million board feet of hot logs supposedly resulting from Enverga's anti-illegal logging campaign.

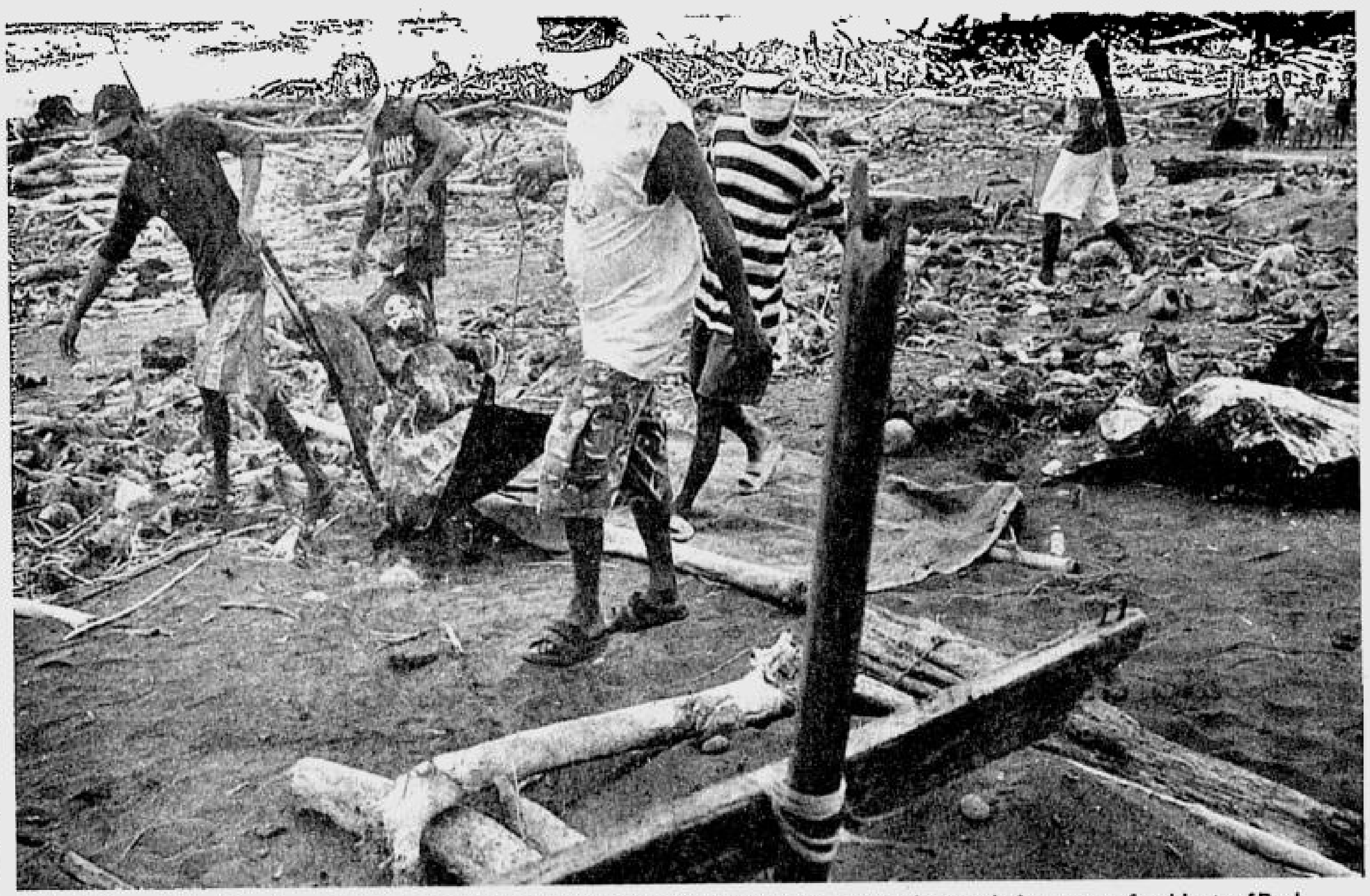
However, during an investigation called by the provincial council, it turned out that the accomplishment report listed logs still floating at the Umiray and Agus rivers and which are yet to be confiscated.

During the rally, it was learned that the governor was out of the country when floods and landslides struck Monday.

Enverga showed up to distribute relief goods a day after the disaster.

Carmela Manzano, the province's "little governor," appealed to the people to stop blaming anyone for the tragedy.

"Let us build bridges instead of walls," he said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



A STARK reminder of man's neglect and abuse of nature takes the form of wooden crosses that mark the graves of residents of Real, Quezon who died due to landslides and floods brought by successive typhoons. AP

Cordillera communities offer lesson in ecology

By Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A mix of an ingrained culture of preservation and conservation plus public vigilance among some communities in the Cordillera may yet help teach other Filipinos to protect whatever is left of the country's forest cover.

One community, which has been practicing ecological conservation long before this has become in vogue, is the remote sitio or sub-village of Buneg at Barangay Nabuangan in Conner town in Apayao.

The 36 families of Buneg, accessible after a seven to eight-hour uphill climb from the nearest road in Conner, practice *kaingin* or slash-and-burn farming to augment the rice they cultivate in their terraces.

But the *kaingin* farms of this upland folk, who belong to the indigenous Mabaka tribe, are designated in and limited to particular areas.

As taught by their elders, the Mabaka folk don't touch the headwaters and watersheds, which nurture their springs, brooks and rivers.

They also gather wood from the forests, but they take only what they need to build their homes or to make simple farm implements such as wooden plows and handles for hoes.

In gathering rattan, they carefully choose only the mature ones. They hunt deer and wild pigs but they spare the pregnant and the young ones.

These Mabaka conservation practices are part of their culture of lapat, which essentially is based on the principle that the coming generations must have something to inherit.

Mabaka elder Andanan Agagen said, *"Saan laeng met nga tatta nga mangan ka. Ag-ibati ka met a para iti masakbayan.* (It's not only now that you would eat. So leave something, which you can hunt or gather in the future.)"

Rewards

The Mabaka folk's ingrained philosophy of saving something for tomorrow continues to reward them.

The nearby river, for example, teems with fish so much so that Agagen's wife, bringing a thin blanket as fishnet, would run to the river and catch fish for 30 minutes to almost an hour and would bring home something for lunch.

Occasionally, community members dine out in a picnic by the river. They bring only rice and the river takes care of their viand, which consists of *bunog* (a fresh water thumb-size fish), freshwater shrimps, eels, and other fish species.

Fresh salads of edible ferns (*pako*) and wild vegetables such as *dong-ilay* (a dandelion variety), which abound along the riverbank, complete the picnic treat.

Last year, the Mabaka folk celebrated in a thanksgiving feast what they considered a blessing for their remote community—a 7.5 kilowatt micro-hydropower facility, which has since been supplying them free electricity.

The Quezon City-based nongovernment group Sibol ng Agham at Teknolohiya (Sibat), which sought funding from the United Nations Development Program, chose *Buneg* for the micro-hydropower project.

"*Buneg* was ideal for the project because one of its crucial component was watershed management, which has long been part of the community's culture," said Sibat engineer Frank Taguba, who helped supervise the project the Mabaka folk themselves implemented through cooperative labor.

Vigilance

In the 1970s Cellophil Resources Corp., a paper mill owned by a crony of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, sought to log wide swaths of forests in Abra, Apayao, Kalinga and Mt. Province.

But the Mabaka folk, Tinggians in Abra, the Kalingas and the Bontoks kept their vigil against Cellophil.

Having operated under the barrels of guns of Marcos' martial law regime, Cellophil prompted many sons and daughters of tribal communities to join the clandestine New People's Army, which burned bulldozers and other equipment of the paper mill.

Those who did not go underground barricaded and guarded their communities against the chainsaws of Cellophil.

This tradition of vigilance remains intact in some Cordillera communities. In the tourist town of Sagada in Mt. Province, for example, community folk and local officials have kept their vigil against outside big entrepreneurs who sought to establish big businesses such as mega-hotels and golf courses, which entail clearing forests.

This explains why practically all the business establishments in Sagada—from a yoghurt house and restaurants to hotels and inns—are owned and managed by the residents.

Except for one hotel, which is slightly bigger than the municipal hall, all hotels and inns in Sagada are of minimal sizes.

The reason, local officials said, is to prevent a kind of landscaping that has to clear and cut trees and scrape earth as they do in many real estate subdivisions elsewhere in the country.

It also helps that in Sagada, residents respect family or clan-managed pine woodlots. Residents thus get firewood or timber for housing from their own family or clan woodlots.

Although there were some instances of "timber poaching," some Sagada women, such as the members of an Episcopal women's organization in the village of Aguid, have formed forest patrols against poachers.

A few years back, Aguid women stopped a jeep full of poached pine logs.

Such vigilance from the women of Aguid also extends to pushing barangay ordinances banning the sale of liquor and banning gambling.

Ifugao muyong

Just above every cluster of the famed rice terraces in Banaue and other towns in Ifugao is a lush woodlot. A clan or a group of clans maintains the woodlot called *muyong*.

As old as the rice terraces, the Ifugaos' *muyong* practice has helped ensure continuous irrigation for the "giant stairways to heaven."

In Benguet, the only upland town that still practices the *muyong* tradition is Bakun, the first indigenous community in the country to be given a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title in 2002.

Through their *muyong* practice, the Kankanaey and Bago folk of Bakun were able to protect and expand their second growth pine forests, which were almost wiped out by sawmill and logging firms in earlier decades.

Other former forested areas in Benguet such as in Buguias town have been transformed into cabbage and potato farms.

It is thus not surprising that some residents of Buguias have to go to Bakun to get some pine logs with which to make coffins for their dead.

Under the old burial tradition of Benguet, the dead must be placed in carved-out logs without the use of nails so some people from neighboring towns bereft of trees often go to Bakun for coffins for their dead.

In Benguet, sawmills and logging firms, which were operated mostly by big mining firms introduced during the American period, helped pave the way for vegetable farms.

After the centuries-old pine trees were logged, farmers, who learned vegetable farming, followed the trail of the sawmills and logging firms.

Benguet has eventually found a multimillion-peso industry in vegetable farming, but except for a few communities like Bakun, the province, as it continues to lose its forest cover, is vulnerable to disasters such as what befell Aurora and Quezon in the wake of four typhoons.

Cambodian activist sees no women's role in Mindanao projects

DAVAO CITY—Women activists expressed discontent over projects funded by foreign donors in Mindanao, saying they were not the kind that would improve women's lives should there be a peace agreement between the Philippine government and Muslim separatists.

Chanthou Boua, a Cambodian activist who took part in a women's forum here, said ongoing health and livelihood programs by foreign donors in Mindanao may have benefited women and children in general, but they fall short of improving women's lot in society.

"It's very easy to talk of livelihood," Boua said at a forum where various foreign donors talked about their ongoing projects in Mindanao.

"But if you really want change for women, you have to change the way people do things."

Most of the projects presented by foreign donors involved livelihood, literacy and health care programs for women in conflict areas.

"There's a gap between the donors' activities (in Mindanao) and improving the lot of women," Boua said.

"Whether we're encouraging savings or vegetable gardening, what needs to be done has to be done in a way that builds trust in the strength of women . . ."

Among the donors taking part in the forum were the United States Assistance for International Development (USAID), the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Canadian for International Development Assistance (CIDA).

USAID listed over 25,000 former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) combatants and 45 cooperatives as beneficiaries of programs that it funded.

The WB said its economic livelihood projects in Central Mindanao ushered in a shift in traditional gender patterns among Bangsamoros and women evacuees.

"They used to be seen but never heard," said Chona Echavez, WB gender and conflict specialist, referring to women evacuees in Central Mindanao. "Now they are both heard and seen." *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Fire hits funeral chapel

By Tina G. Santos

MOURNERS at a funeral parlor in Quezon City panicked after an electric spark touched off a fire in one of the parlor's chapels early yesterday morning.

The fire, which began around 4 a.m., gutted part of La Funeraria Paz's Chapel B in Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Eduardo Chua, who was attending a relative's wake, said he noticed smoke coming from the ceiling, but thought it came from a lighted joss stick.

Along with the other mourners, Chua immediately ran outside as they saw the smoke thicken.

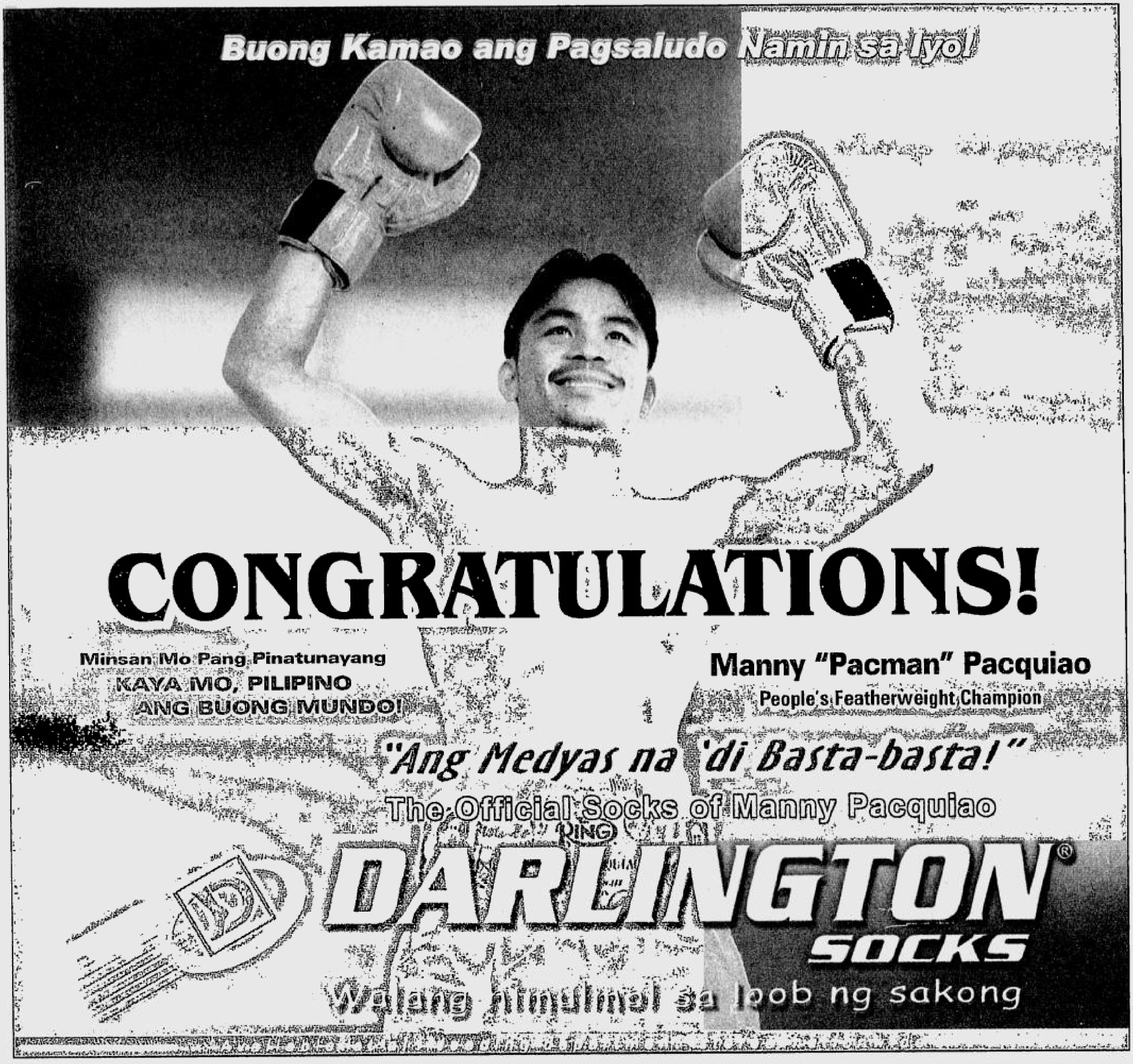
By this time, the fire started to eat up a bigger portion of the ceiling.

Coffins were immediately transferred to an adjacent building.

Fire trucks arrived to put out the fire, which lasted for less than an hour.

Investigators have yet to determine the nature of the fire and assess the extent of damage.

Initial investigation showed that the blaze could have been caused by faulty electrical wiring.



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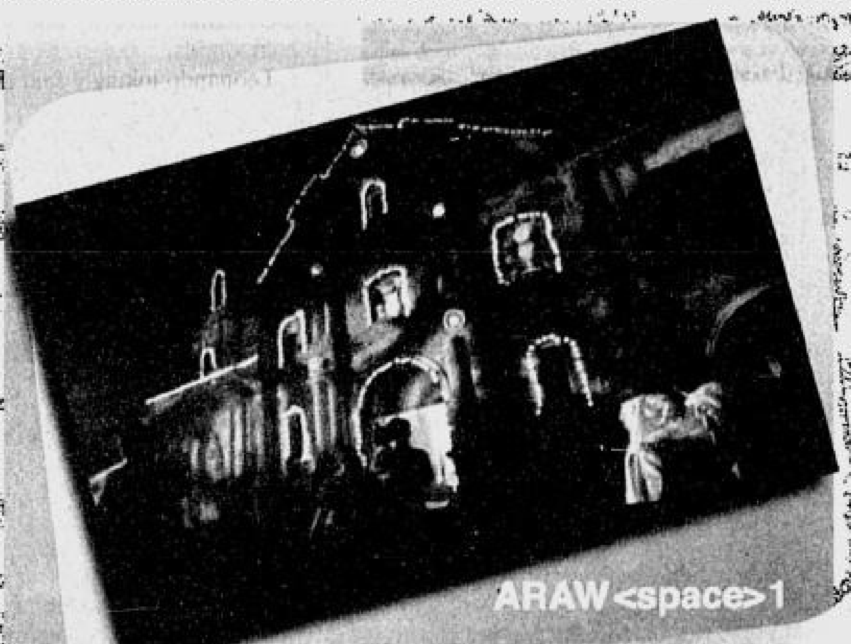

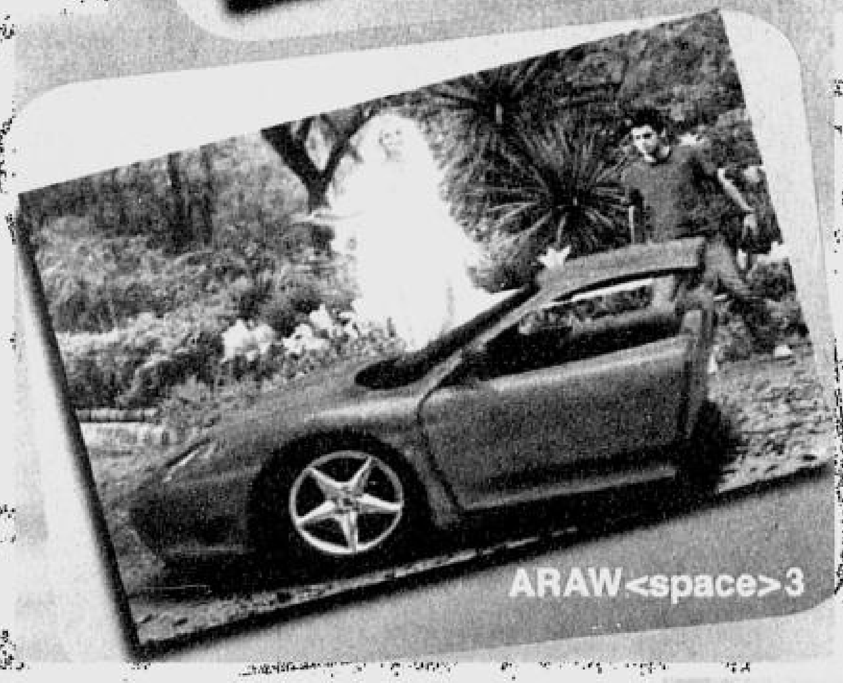

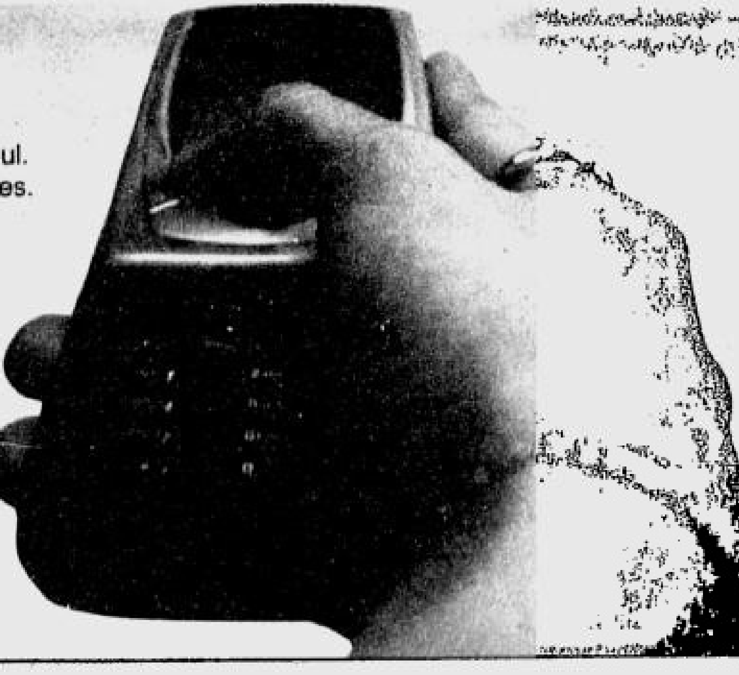

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MWSS water allocation cut looms in Jan.

By Norman Bordadora

THE NATIONAL Water Resources Board yesterday said that the Umiray tunnel facility that brings water from the Quezon watershed to Angat Dam in Bulacan has been so severely damaged that it needs to cut the water allocation for the domestic, commercial and industrial needs of Metro Manila.

Ramon Alikpala, executive director of the NWRB, told the INQUIRER that the country's water use regulation agency may have to cut back its water allocation from Angat Dam for end users of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System in order to keep irrigation reserves sufficient for at least one planting season.

He said the NWRB may have to cut in January by one cubic meter per second the 43 cubic meter per second it has been allocating the MWSS since January this year.

Alikpala called for water conservation measures, especially since the NWRB's cut back measures could mean either less water pressure or less hours of water service in the parts of Metro Manila served by MWSS concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad.

"We want to do the cut backs as minimal and as gradual as possible so that its effects would not be quite drastic," Alikpala said.

"The MWSS said it is looking at four to six months as the period within which to repair the 13-kilometer tunnel that cuts through the Sierra Madre range toward Angat Dam," he added.

Alikpala said the NWRB wants the water level in Angat Dam to be above 180 meters until such time that the farmers in Bulacan and some parts of Pampanga have already completed planting and harvesting at least once next year.

He expressed fears, however, that the water level could already reach the 180-meter level by March.

"We may have to cut back on the water allocation so our farmers in Bulacan and Pampanga could still have at least one planting season to work with. If not, they may no longer plant because there'd be no water for irrigation," Alikpala added.

MWSS administrator Orlando Honrade had said that Angat Dam's water level is more than sufficient at this point because of the rains brought by the four tropical cyclones from mid-November to early December.

"Our concern would be when these reserves have already been used up," Honrade said.

Alikpala made the announcement of the planned cut backs following the NWRB's meeting with other agencies concerned. with the recent destruction by landslides, loose logs and other debris of the MWSS facility at the Umiray River in the mountains of General Nakar town in Quezon.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the NWRB, MWSS, the National Irrigation Administration and the National Power Corp.

Pius XII workers stage strike

By Leila B. Salaverria

FIFTY members of the Pius XII Catholic Center went on strike yesterday after five months of negotiations for a wage increase bogged down.

The strike left a few staff members to man the center's offices and over 200 rooms in its hostels and dormitories.

Domingo Dando, lawyer for the Pius XII Catholic Center Employees Association, said talks for the Collective Bargaining Agreement fell through when the management kept on offering them a monthly wage increase of P100 for the next five years.

The employees had initially asked for a P3,000 per month wage increase, but Dando said the group was willing to lower their demand and accept an increase of less than P1,000, but not as little as P100 a day.

Nicolas Oribe, president of the employees association, said the group had tried for five months to ask for a reasonable wage hike, but their request was not heeded.

He said that yesterday's strike was the first for the 40-year-old center.

A meeting between the management and the workers has been scheduled today by the National Conciliation and Mediation Board.

The spokesperson of the Pius XII Catholic Center, Tita de Villa, said she hoped the management and the employees would still keep negotiations open so that they could both solve the problem, in the spirit of Christmas.

According to De Villa, who is also the treasurer of the Board of Trustees, the high operating expense has to be taken into consideration regarding the employees' demands for a wage increase.

"I don't think the situation is hopeless," she added.

"I'm sure the management and the employees still have enough goodwill left for everybody's sake."

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ZAPOTE MONUMENT INAUGURAL. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo shares a light moment with Sen. Manny Villar during the inauguration of the Battlefield of Zapote monument in Parañaque City yesterday. EDWIN BACASMAS

Unexpected donors swell relief efforts

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THEY, too, were touched.

The 17,000 inmates of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa pooled together more than 200 sacks and 19 big boxes of used clothing for the victims of typhoons Winnie and Yoyong.

"The enormity of the destruction melted the hearts even of maximum security prisoners," said NBP Supt. Juanito Leopando.

According to Leopando, the inmates were able to monitor the magnitude of the devastation through television, their other link to the outside world apart from their visitors.

He said the prisoners told him that they wanted to do their share to contribute no matter how insignificant.

Leopando said the inmates did not need to be asked twice.

He said he was surprised to find out that the prisoners were able to pool together their contributions for the victims of the latest typhoons that affected residents of several provinces in Luzon at short notice.

The prison official met the 12 heads of the different jail groups last Friday and asked if they wanted to give something for the victims. Among these were the Sputnik, Commando, Batang Cebu and Batang Mindanao gangs.

The heads represented inmates from both the medium security and maximum security compounds.

Leopando jokingly said that the donations were definitely not government issue orange shirts with the letter P on it, but came from the inmates and their relatives.

The employees of the Bureau of Corrections also did their own fundraising and were able to collect 20 boxes of used clothing and 40 sacks of rice for "Operation Tulong ng NBP," Leopando said.

Director Vicente Vinarao, the NBP director, would turn over the donations to the agencies involved in relief operations, he added.

Annabelle fights back, sues businesswoman

By Tina G. Santos

ANNABELLE Rama, the controversial mother of beauty queen-actress Ruffa Gutierrez, yesterday filed estafa charges against a businesswoman who earlier sued her for breach of contract.

In her complaint affidavit filed before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, Rama said she decided to sue Shirley Quiambao and her daughter Rochelle for estafa for allegedly issuing "dishonored" checks as payment for the pieces of jewelry the Quiambaos had reportedly purchased from her.

Rama narrated that the Quiambaos went to her house on Derby Street, White Plains, last Nov. 4 and expressed interest in the pieces of jewelry they saw worn by the complainant's daughter, Ruffa, in the pictures published in a magazine.

Rama said the Quiambaos offered to buy the pieces of jewelry for P339,000 if she could see to it that Rochelle becomes a presenter at the Star Awards.

"She (Shirley) bribed me into doing what she wanted by buying jewelry from me," Rama told the INQUIRER earlier.

The Quiambaos issued post-dated checks but these were dishonored because Shirley ordered the bank to stop payments.

Rama also asked the court to order the Quiambaos to pay her P3 million in moral and exemplary damages.

Sought for comment, Ruy Alberto Rondain, the Quiambaos' counsel, said they had yet to receive a copy of Rama's complaint even as he denied Rama's allegations, saying his clients had paid for all the jewelry they purchased.

The Quiambaos earlier filed a complaint against Rama before the Quezon City court, accusing her of breaking their agreement that she would manage their daughter's career.

The Quiambaos also sought damages and had asked the court to prevent Rama from prejudicing Rochelle's career.

They also accused Rama of selling overpriced jewelry to them.

Shirley said she bought P2 million worth of jewelry from Rama,

When appraised, the gems were worth only half the price, Shirley claimed.

Eagle finds nest in Makati building

By Carlo C. Mariano
Trainee

A HUGE white-bellied sea eagle was found on the roof deck of a building housing offices and apartments along Lucban Street, Bangkal, Makati City, at around 5:30 a.m. yesterday.

Letty Dorio, owner of the building, said the bird was two feet tall and had a wing span of 3 feet.

She said her housemaid was the first to see the eagle. "The bird had followed our maid down to the fourth floor, until it settled on a chair in our dining room," Dorio said.

The bird was fed raw chicken while it was in their care, she added.

The eagle has been turned over to an animal rescue shelter at the Parks and Wildlife center in Quezon City.

Dr. Esteven Toledo, head of the rescue center under the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said the bird is not an endangered species and can be found in many parts of Asia. *With Volt Contreras*

Why blame GMA for FPJ's condition?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

DIRECTOR General Edgar Aglipay, chief of the Philippine National Police, is one honest leader.

Instead of contesting the report of an international anti-corruption watchdog that the PNP is the country's most corrupt institution—a natural thing to do—he admits it.

"We will change from now on," Aglipay said, "we will do everything that the public wants us to do."

An admission of wrongdoing is one step halfway to completely reforming the police organization.

One can never reform if he doesn't admit his shortcomings. A drug dependent, for example, cannot be rehabilitated unless he admits to being an addict.

How very humble of Aglipay to do that. Humility is a sign of a great leader.

***

But Aglipay will have to work overtime in reforming the organization that he will leave in a few months. He will retire early next year because his stay at the PNP is already an extension.

He will have to be very firm in his directives. If he says so-and-so is reassigned to a particular office, his order should be enforced to the letter.

Subordinates will not follow a wishy-washy leader.

Another suggestion, if I may: Aglipay should order all PNP units handling complaints of abuses by cops to expedite their investigation.

One of the reasons for the public's loss of confidence in the PNP is the perception that it protects its own, even the abusive and corrupt ones.

It takes months and even years for PNP investigative bodies to decide cases against cops filed by civilians. After so many months of waiting, many civilians are disheartened to find that the cops they complained of had gotten off the hook.

From now on, all cases of brutality and human rights violations filed by civilians against policemen should immediately be acted upon. There should be a period within which a case should be decided.

***

Rabid followers of actor Fernando Poe Jr. are blaming President Macapagal-Arroyo for his having a stroke.

I talked with First Gentleman Mike Arroyo yesterday morning. He told me the reason GMA couldn't go to St. Luke's Hospital to sympathize with FPJ's family was the advice from the Presidential Security Group.

The PSG told GMA that some FPJ followers might try to prevent GMA from entering the hospital.

How stupid could those morons get!

Why would they do that? Why do they blame the President for FPJ's condition.

FPJ followers said that his defeat contributed to his having a stroke.

But in any contest, there will always be a winner and a loser.

Is it GMA's fault that FPJ couldn't take his loss that resulted in his having a stroke?

The truth is that "Da King" also was not taking care of himself. He was drinking too much. And, yes, he kept his hard feelings bottled up.

Politicians should not add to the hurt feelings of gullible FPJ fans by feeding on their hatred for GMA.

What will they get by preventing the President from sympathizing with FPJ's relatives?

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Noise gives Acetylene Gang away

By Leila B. Salaverria

BECAUSE they failed to muffle the noise made by tools of their trade, 21 suspected members of the dreaded "Acetylene Gang" were apprehended by lawmen Friday night as they were in the thick of their work.

The gang robs banks and pawnshops by using torches to drill walls of intended targets to gain entry.

The suspects, which included four women, were arrested after agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Caloocan police caught them while they were allegedly trying to drill a hole on the wall of an apartment right beside the United Overseas Bank (UOB) at Monumento.

At the time of the arrest, the group, reportedly miners from the Mountain Province, had been able to create a sizeable opening on the apartment's wall, with the bank wall already visible, said NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

The 21 suspects presented to the media yesterday were identified as Salvy Corpus, the alleged leader, Amey Marcos, Marlyn Fernandez, Sumag Bal-ad, Andrew Matias, Roy Mayat and Val Agan; Robert Lizardo Victor Guitlen, Diana Loyodan, Rosemarie Fernandez, James Baldong, Welbert Waknut and Rino Liko; Kopap-e Biag, Christopher Tibon, Ceasar Mayapit, Wesley Pagaspas, Esteban Codod, William Padingit and Henry Tumitit.

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco (center) and bureau officials Nestor Mantaring (left) and Alex Tenerefe inspect guns and equipment used by alleged members of the Acetylene Gang (behind) to drill their way into banks and pawnshops they intend to rob. ERIK ARAZAS

The authorities also recovered two .45 guns and the group's equipment, including an LPG tank, two oxygen tanks, a welding torch, a blow torch, two drill sets, an oxygen regulator, two chisels, rope, flashlights and screwdrivers. Also found were an iron saw, a crowbar, shears and a wire cutter. The equipment is used to drill holes not just through walls, but also through steel vaults found in banks.

The NBI's Ruel Lasala, chief of the Reaction, Arrest and Interdiction Division said the group's modus operandi was to rent an apartment beside a targeted bank or pawnshop.

A similar modus operandi was used by the suspects who allegedly broke into the Prudential Bank along España, Manila, in April.

Lasala said one member had rented a room at the building beside the UOB at the corner of Edsa and Gen. Tinio Street in Caloocan in July this year. Two more rooms were rented by the group in November, he added.

Check out new work ID for cops

By Christian V. Esguerra

WANT to know if your friendly neighborhood cop is supposed to be doing his work in your neighborhood?

Check out his "item card," a new measure the Philippine National Police has come up with to make sure that each of its 115,000 men has something to do, and is accountable for it.

Conspicuously clipped on a policeman's uniform is a plastic-covered identification not much bigger than a regular-sized calling card.

It spells out his job description that is so specific it tells where a cop should be at any given time.

So if you have any doubts why a uniformed cop is on the prowl in your neighborhood, ask for his "item card" and you'll know right away if he's up to something fishy, said Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson.

"The idea is to tell everyone where a policeman should be during the full eight hours when he's supposed to be working," he said.

All PNP officers, from Director General Edgar Aglipay down to the lowly patrolman, are required to wear the cards as part of their regular uniform.

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3. Child will be prompted to choose from a list of possible gift wishes: Guess Kids clothes, Robosapien toy, or watch Disney On Ice at Araneta Coliseum. Child can choose desired wish by replying to 2811 with the number of the chosen gift.
4. Child will then receive a message informing him/her that Santa received his/her wish. The system will send a text message to the parent informing him/her of the child's wish with any of the following discount mobile coupons:
   - 30% off on Disney On Ice Ticket purchases (weekday shows) at the Ticketnet Araneta Center outlet from December 10 to January 2.
   - 20% discount (₱1,000 off) with every 14" Robosapien purchase at participating Kidz Station, Rustan and Toy Kingdom outlets in GMA, Cavite, Pampanga and Batangas from December 10 to January 15.
   - 15% off on clothes purchased at all Guess Kids outlets in GMA from December 10 to January 15.

Sample Mobile Coupon:

Show this text to all Guess Kids outlets in GMA to avail of 15% off on clothes

5. Parent shall present the discount mobile coupon at the participating outlet to avail of the discount.
6. The child can choose up to 3 different gift wishes. If the child wishes for a gift item twice, parent will only receive 1 discount mobile coupon for the 2 wishes.
7. If more than 1 child is registered under the parent, and all children wished for the same gift, parent will receive 1 discount mobile coupon per child.

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December 10, 2004 to January 15, 2005

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5902, Series of 2004

BOXING: Yanig sa Taguig; 6 p.m. (r); Solar Sports—Catch the replay of this epic encounter.

BASKETBALL: NBA-Mavs vs Bulls; 9:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Dallas pays a visit to the Windy City.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL-Chiefs vs Titans; 10 a.m. (r-8:30 p.m.); ESPN—Kansas City battles Tennessee in a clash of AFC rivals.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Mangulat

TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 14, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Don't miss
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Entertainment section
Happy Viewing!

Blu Girls blank Indons; Asian 'heavies' also win

CHINA, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines rolled to their second straight victories yesterday as the favorites frolicked again in the face of lowly opposition in the 12-nation eighth Asian women's softball championship at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

GAMES TODAY (*Rizal Ballpark*)
8 a.m.—Hong Kong vs Singapore
10 a.m.—Indonesia vs Thailand
12 noon—Chinese-Taipei vs South Korea
2 p.m.—North Korea vs RP
4 p.m.—Japan vs India
6 p.m.—China vs Malaysia

Veteran Jaydilyn Arca fired a three hitter while getting a splendid eight-hit support as the RP Blu Girls beat Indonesia, 3-0, to match pace with defending champion China, Athens' Olympics bronze medalist Japan and South Korea, who downed their respective rivals with amazing ease.

The Chinese blanked North Korea, 7-0, the Japanese were just as overpowering in their 6-0 demolition of Chinese-Taipei and the South Koreans bombarded Hong Kong, 8-0, to highlight a big day for heavyweights in this tournament serving as the Asian qualifying for the 2006 world championship in Beijing.

After scoring only one run in the first four innings, the Blu Girls finally put away the Indonesians with a two-run binge in the fifth on two doubles and a bunt to the cheers of a sizeable crowd that included some famed Blu Girls of another era led by Aleli Nabong.

With two outs, Gina Salvador bunted off Indonesian starter Muchtiara Halmaheran, stole second and finally scored on Diona Macasu's double to right field on a 2-3 count to give the Blu Girls a 2-0 lead.

Then Nelia Lara doubled to the center to score Macasu for the Blu Girls' second run in the fifth inning.

The Blu Girls, who debuted with an abbreviated 8-0 blanking of Singapore Sunday, scored right in the first inning when Salvador lined a long blast to left field with one out to score Macasu, who had earlier singled to short.

"Three hits? *Di na masama siguro yon. Buti kumagat yung mga* (Not bad. Good thing we connected with the) curves," said Arca, second behind Corazon Soberre in the Blu Girls' rotation.

The Japanese bombed three Taiwanese pitchers with nine hits, five coming in the first inning as they took a 4-0 lead before breaking the game wide open with another pair of runs on three hits in the third.

As expected, the Chinese had an easy time taking the measure of the North Koreans, who could only produce two hits off Li Qi, ranked only No. 3 in China's pitching rotation.

BLU GIRL Reynali Ardio beats the Indonesian tag at third. JESS YUSON

Catcher Lu Yi went two-for-three, including a two-run double in the fifth inning as the Chinese, seeking a fifth straight title, raced to a 6-0 lead as they feasted on the erratic pitching of Kim Un Sim, who gave up nine hits.

The week-long tournament organized by the Amateur Softball Association of the Philippines headed by former Manila Rep. Harry C. Angping resumes today with a six-game program.

The scores:
Indonesia 000 000 0—0 3 1
Philippines 100 020 X—3 8 2

Batteries: M. Halmahera (pitcher), R. Escandar (catcher) Indonesia; J. Arca (pitcher), H. Bongar (catcher) Philippines

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- Tiger tops World Challenge tilt /A25
- Red Bull collides with Purefoods /A24

Pampanga, Quezon cagers battle for 3rd

GAME TODAY (*University of the Assumption*)
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre-Pampanga vs Quezon Huskers
GAME TOMORROW (*New Cebu City Coliseum*)
6 p.m.—M. Lhuillier-Cebu City vs Ilocos Sur Snipers

SAN FERNANDO—Harbour Centre-Pampanga and the Quezon Huskers dispute third place today in the United Regional Basketball League at the University of Assumption gym here.

The 4 p.m. game will also serve as the league's special fundraising campaign for victims of the recent typhoons that struck Quezon and nearby provinces.

Harbour Centre CEO Mikee Romero provided the seed money for the fund drive. The rest of the league's team owners have also contributed to the fund.

Huskers team owner and Quezon Gov. Willie L. Enverga and businessman Benny Brizuela thanked their fellow team owners for heeding their call for help.

But there will be no love lost between the Pampanga and Quezon squads on the court.

The Huskers are aching to get back at the Kapampangans, who shattered the Huskers' championship hopes with a 91-86 victory on the final day of the semifinals on Dec. 3 in Cebu City.

The Huskers finished the semifinals with a 3-3 card, a game behind eventual finalists M. Lhuillier-Cebu City and the Ilocos Sur Snipers at 4-2. Harbour Centre finished at 1-5.

M. Lhuillier and Ilocos Sur Snipers are gearing up for Games Three and Four of their best-of-five series at the New Cebu Coliseum.

The title series between the Jewelers and the Snipers is tied at 1-1 with M. Lhuillier taking Game One, 80-77, and Ilocos Sur bouncing back in Game Two, 85-76, last Sunday.

Harbour Centre coach Adriano "Bong" Go will rely anew on league scoring leader Ariel Garcia, Jojo Manalo, Billy Bansil, VJ Santos and Long David to make up for the Kapampangans' lackluster stint in the semifinals.

Huskers Coach Francis Rodriguez hopes his players can end their personal slumps to prevent a repeat of their roller-coaster semis ride.

Espinola captures squash crown

NATIONAL player Ricky Espinola subdued perennial champion Arnel Bergonia, 8-6, 9-0, 5-9, 9-3, last Saturday to bag the Open crown in the fifth leg of the Milo/SRAP (Squash Rackets Association of the Philippines) national circuit at the Makati Sports Club courts.

Frankie Pelino took third spot by beating Robert Garcia, 1-9, 9-2, 9-2, 9-4.

Sammy Alas and PJ Austria shared the day's honors by ruling classes B and C, respectively.

Alas toppled Jessie Lapore, 9-1, 9-4, 0-9, 9-1, while Austria held off Harry Malinao, 9-2, 9-0, 4-9, 10-9.

Richard Espinola and Jovaven Tutanes finished third in B and C, respectively.

Espinola tripped Franco Limjuco, 9-7, 7-9, 9-6, 9-7, while Tutanes trimmed Rudy Tablate, 9-7, 9-2, 5-9, 9-6.

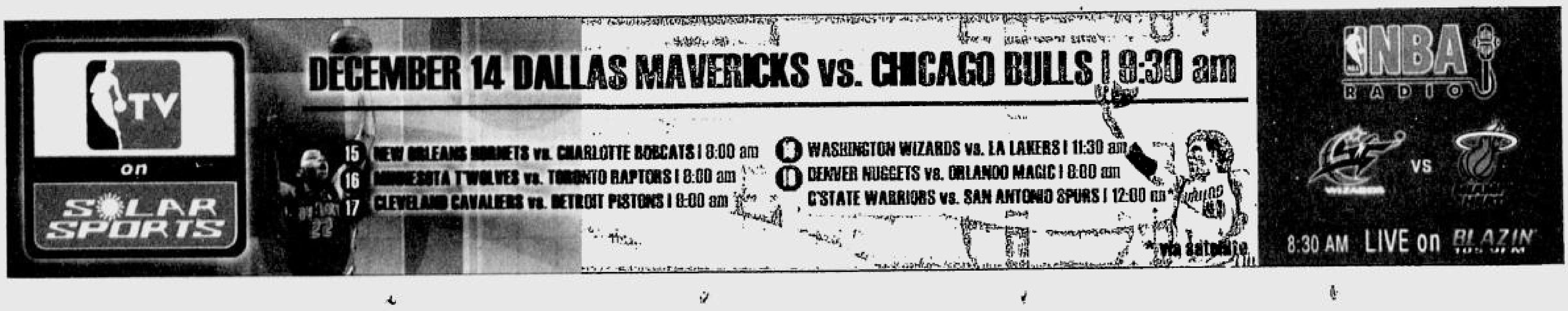
Trophies and cash prizes were given to the winners by squash president Romeo Ribano.

Golf
INQUIRER Golf Monthly
Fame and FORTUNE
Jenny Rosales comes home with an accomplished mission

The next time J-RO reads the Inquirer Golf Monthly, it will be a lot different from the one she's holding

And she'll be on the cover again!

Watch out for the year-end GLOSSY issue of IGM on Tuesday Dec 21



DECEMBER 14 DALLAS MAVERICKS vs. CHICAGO BULLS | 9:30 am

15 NEW ORLEANS HORNETS vs. CHARLOTTE BOBCATS | 8:00 am
16 MINNESOTA T'WOLVES vs. TORONTO RAPTORS | 8:00 am
17 CLEVELAND CAVALIERS vs. DETROIT PISTONS | 8:00 am
WASHINGTON WIZARDS vs. LA LAKERS | 11:30 am
DENVER NUGGETS vs. ORLANDO MAGIC | 8:00 am
G'STATE WARRIORS vs. SAN ANTONIO SPURS | 12:00 nn
*via satellite

8:30 AM LIVE on BLAZIN'

Surprise aquathlon entry pulls off shock win

THE SURPRISE entry's victory hardly came as a shock.

Fil-American and national triathlon athlete Arland Macasieb topped the National Aquathlon Championship hosted by Matabungkay Beach Resort and Hotel over the weekend.

The 28-year-old Macasieb, who is here primarily to attend a couple of weddings, trailed the leaders in both the 2.5-K first run leg and the 1.5-K bike leg before taking command near the halfway mark of the remaining 5-K run. He won in 59 minutes and 0.1 second.

Eldy Banluta finished second in 59:47 while Mikki Quilala landed third in 59.57.'

"It was tough getting in and out of the water because of the low tide," said Macasieb, the best placed Filipino in the recent Asian Championship in Subic. "I am looking at the Asian Championship in Bangkok and the Southeast Asian Games here next year."

National duathlon champion Ryan "Bad Boy" Mendoza lived up to expectations in ruling the 20K run-100K bike-10K run PowerBar Long Distance Duathlon held simultaneously with the aquathlon event at the same venue.

Mendoza led from start to finish and was never pressured. He clocked 5:05.13, almost 25 minutes ahead of second placer Ige Lopez, who timed 5:29.04. Bicolano Franklin Penalosa wound up third in 5:33.51.

La Salle student LC Langit, 18, pulled off an upset in the women's side of the aquathlon, beating fellow national team member Mimi Lucas in 1:02.26. Lucas timed 1:03.07 with up-and-coming Kim Mangrobang third in 1:08.04.

Nona Torres of Ayala Alabang topped the women's PowerBar race in 7:50.16.

PowerBar brand manager Raul Cuevas, elated by the quality of the field, promised PowerBar's increased participation in triathlon, duathlon, aquathlon and adventure races next year.

More than 100 triathletes and duathletes, including Alaska Aces team owner Fred Uytengsu, joined the event supported by David's Salon, Mizuno and Nescafe 3-in-1.

Paragua downs Indon GM, leads Singapore Masters

FILIPINO Grandmaster-candidate Mark Paragua defeated GM Susanto Megaranto of Indonesia yesterday to grab the solo lead after three rounds of the 2004 Singapore Masters International Open at the Marine Crescent center in Singapore.

The second-seeded Paragua boosted his total to a perfect 3.0 points and is scheduled to meet 1996 Asian junior champion GM Wu Wenjin of China in today's fourth round of the $15,000 meet.

Wu, ranked third, was at 2.5 points after beating Fide Master Goh Weiming of Singapore.

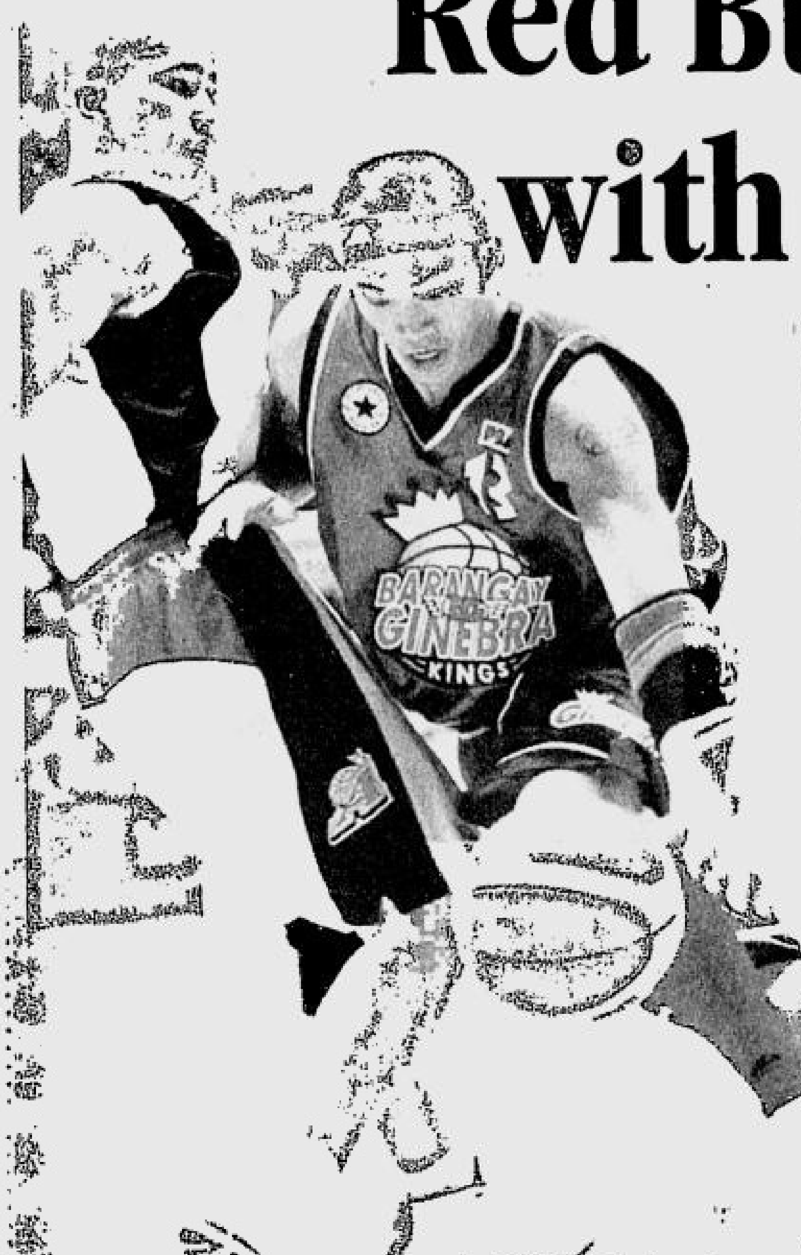
The 20-year-old Paragua had earlier beaten A. Setiawan of Indonesia and Malaysian FM Wong Zi Jing.

Another Filipino entry, Singapore-based Fide Master Julio Catalino Sadorra, beat Robin Shaw of Australia to post 2.0 points.

Sadorra, who hails from Cavite, plays Chinese GM Yu Shaoteng today.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Red Bull collides with Purefoods



JAYJAY Helterbrand (right) of Ginebra dribbles past Mike Cortez of Alaska in their game won by the Aces, 102-88.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

THE BEST against the worst rebounding squads. For sure, there will be a lot of pushing, body banging and jockeying for positions when Red Bull Barako clashes with Purefoods today in the Gran Matador Philippine Cup at the San Sebastian Recoletos Gym in Cavite City.

STANDINGS	W	L
Talk N Text	11	4
Ginebra	10	5
Shell	10	6
San Miguel	7	8
Purefoods	7	8
Alaska	7	9
Coca-Cola	7	9
Red Bull	6	8
Sta. Lucia	5	9
FedEx	5	9

GAME TODAY (*SSC Gym, Cavite City*)

6 p.m.—Purefoods vs Red Bull Barako

The Barakos, the league's top rebounding squad, are expected to pound the lane against the Hotdogs, who have been consistently beaten underneath the basket, in their 6 p.m. duel.

"We're No. 1 in rebounding not because of the big men but because our pointguards are also pulling down rebounds," said Red Bull Barako coach Yeng Guiao. "That's the reason why we've been winning games."

By grabbing those boards, the Barakos won three consecutive games over Talk 'N Text, Alaska and Sta. Lucia Realty before the Coca-Cola Tigers defeated them, 102-96, Sunday.

The Tigers drove the knife into the heart of Red Bull's winning formula by beating the Barakos off the boards, 66-47, to improve their chances of securing a twice-to-beat incentive in the wildcard phase.

Prior to that game, the Barakos averaged 58.9 rebounds while the TJ Hotdogs grabbed 44.9 boards (10th and last among the teams) before they lost to the Sta. Lucia Realtors last week.

The Barakos remain tops in rebounding, though.

Besides trying to bounce back from a defeat, the Barakos (6-8) are raring to avenge an 81-101 loss against the TJ Hotdogs in the game sponsored by Lactovitale.

"We just want to avoid the ninth and 10th places because it puts a team at a disadvantage," said Guiao.

Teams that finish ninth or 10th will face teams (ranked third and fourth) armed with a twice-to-beat advantage in the wildcard playoffs.

June Navarro

SPORTSWATCH

Asean Para Games countdown begins

THE COUNTDOWN to the 3rd Asean Para Games begins today with the formal launching of the multi-event sportsfest for the differently abled at the Capiz Room of the Manila Pavilion Hotel. The noontime activity will be highlighted by the presentation of the games' logo and the official mascot, Buboy Butanding, of the event set Dec. 12-21 next year in Manila. According to PSC Commissioner and Asean Para Sports Federation (APSF) chair Michael Barredo and Philspada head Luis de Arellano, chair and vice chair, respectively, of the organizing committee, the Para Games will be staged after the 2005 Southeast Asian Games slated Nov. 27-Dec. 5. The guests include APSF officials led by their president, Zainal Abu Zarin, members of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) diplomatic corps and members of the Papgoc (Organizing Committee) advisory board, PSC chair Eric Buhain and Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso L. Dayrit.

Executive active chess under way

THE MCC Executive active chess gets underway at 1 p.m. on Saturday, while another Unrated event is set on Dec. 26 at the club's headquarters at the 4F of J & F Divino Bldg. near LRT 2 Anonas Station in Quezon City. The event is open to businessmen, military officers with rank not lower than a major, players holding managerial or supervisory positions in private and government firms, professionals and those who are practicing other fields of profession for at least one year. Up for grabs in this one-day event is a total pot of P20,000 with the champion pocketing the top purse of P7,000. Registration fee is P500. For details, call MCC at 435-8412 and 0916-852-1069. Meanwhile, Franz Barretto of the University of the Philippines and Jude Ulanday of Dalig, Antipolo City ruled the MCC first weekend back-to-back Saturday and Sunday unrated events Their runner-ups were 11-year-old Haridas Pascua of Mangatarem, Pangasinan, and Manix Santos of Baliuag, Bulacan.

NCA 7-cock derby features 60 fights

BIG-TIME cockfighting for the 2004-2005 season opens with a big bang today and on Thursday as the National Cockers Association (NCA) presents a 7-cock derby at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. More than 60 fights have been lined up beginning at 5 p.m. for the derby to be hosted by engineer Frank Berin and Frankie Uy. Among the NCA members are Frank Berlin, Alex and Gerry Escalona, Patrick Puno, Max and Bebot Roxas, Ruel Feliciano and sons, Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando, Madlambayan Brothers, Efren Canlas, Tony Marfori, JV Magsaysay, E. Nagano and Boyet Joson. Rudy Albano, Edgar Santos, Chito Bersamin, Ruel Ricafort, Claude Bautista, Ompong Plaza, Beboy Uy, Patrick Antonio, Pol Estrellado, Boy Royo, Richard Bates, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Gerry "Boy" Espina, Arnold Mendoza, Boy Velez, Johnny Jalandoni, Jun Santiago, Gov. Ito Ynares, Raymond Velayo, Ronnie Puno, John Capinpin, Boy Jiao, Allan Tan, Tony Tan, Pepito Ngo, Butch Macasaet, Tos Reyes, William Co, Georgie Antonio and Rene de Guzman and Ric Medina from San Francisco, California.

Pasko sa Pasay tilt set tomorrow

THE SECOND round eliminations of Pasay City Cockpit's blockbuster event, the annual Pasko sa Pasay 4-Cock Derby, is scheduled tomorrow, Wednesday, Dec. 15. Backing up the event are Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Mite Free. Participants must submit entries today, Tuesday, Dec. 14, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. and may call 843-1746, 816-6750 and 843-1890 for details (look for Good or Willie). A total of 63 entries registered for yesterday's first round eliminations. All qualifiers will meet on Friday, Dec. 17 for the championship round. As a Christmas gift to participants, the PCC management announced that the guaranteed prize of P1.5 million will be given to the winners regardless of the actual number of entries. The champions will get P850,000, runner-up P300,000 day elimination champions P100,000, handler and gaffer P50,000. Entry fee is P8,800.

3-day Noche Buena stakes P1 million

THE NOCHE Buena '04 5-Cock Derby set on Dec. 23, 25 & 27 at Roligon Mega Cockpit promises to be another blockbuster in the making with more than 100 entries confirmed to see action this early. Hosted by Rolly Ligon and sponsored by Thunderbird Power Feeds, the event stakes a P1 million prize purse for an entry fee of P7,700. All participants will bring home a "pamaskong regalo" upon payment of the entry fee. Among the Christmas gifts are a television set, DVD player, washing machine, flat iron, folding bed, electric fan and other valuable items. Two-pointers in the elimination round will share a P50,000 day champion prize for each day. In the finals, the champion that will register the fastest win in its last fight gets P50,000 more on top of the champion's take. The second placer will get P30,000 while the third will receive P20,000 more. Meanwhile, Roligon manager Danny Ty is inviting all hackfighters to their regular Sunday Mega Hackfights in which automatic cash bonuses await all winners. From fights 1 to 20, the winners will get P1,000 each; fights 21 to 40—P800 each; and 41 to finish—P600 each.

Southridge, Ateneo book Red Ribbon finals berths

SOUTHRIDGE School scored all its goals in the second half to stun top seed Colegio San Agustin, 4-1, over the weekend and barge into the finals of the Red Ribbon Football Fiesta at the Ateneo football field in Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Southridge arranged a titular showdown on Dec. 19 with reigning under-14 champion Ateneo, which blasted Cheng Hua, 3-0, in the other semifinal encounter.

Renee Esguerra struck with a nifty goal halfway through the first half to give CSA, a selection of players from San Agustin, Hed Center and Claret School, the early lead.

But Southridge battled back after the break, and two goals by Justus Fiedler and one apiece by Greggy Yang and Karl Peralta put the outcome beyond doubt.

Jose Montelibano scored twice and Nico Festejo added a goal to give the Ateneans a comfortable victory.

The finals on Sunday at Ateneo will be played after the seven-a-side PFF/Red Ribbon Football Festival.

The under-14 tournament is also backed by adidas, SuperFerry, Petron, Aboitiz and ABC-5's Soccer Showdown show.

Glaring greed

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I WATCHED the Pacquiao-Fahsan fight on Saturday at the Baguio Country Club in the City of Pines. The fight happened on the eve of the conclusion of the 55th Fil-Am Golf Invitational, and GM Anthony de Leon just wouldn't let me leave his turf. The last round of the tournament the following morning was so crucial I couldn't leave my refereeing chores at BCC. Besides, Rico Agcaoili, the BCC president, might just suddenly materialize and, seeing me fleeing the scene, he might recall the beautiful CD of classic love songs he gave me sometime ago if I didn't reconsider. Oh, boy, what a compilation of hits, this CD that includes John Restivo's "Dear Someone"—done meticulously by the Ailing couple.

So, there I was in the nation's summer capital, making do with the boob tube in watching the Pacquiao fight this Saturday night.

Oh, well, on second thought, I won't envy Rep. Mat Defensor. He bought a ticket for—this you gotta believe—P10,500 just to be at ringside.

"I've always been a boxing buff and look, with Pacquiao fighting on home ground, I will not think twice digging deep from my pocket just to buy a ticket at scalper's price," said Mat, himself a boxing champion during his varsity days at UP Diliman.

OK now, to the Pacquiao fight.

Pacquiao did not make a killing at the tills as this was merely a tune-up fight for his February rematch with Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez in February in the US. He earned peanuts, to say the least.

It was the TV people who made a killing, though, bombarding us with commercials every minute of the way.

It's not bad to earn some moolah. It becomes bad, though, when greed comes in.

While we thank the people who showed the fight on TV for free—in America, you need to go Pay-Per-View TV to be able to watch a fight on your home TV—it wouldn't hurt, though, if there should be a semblance of restraint in airing TV commercials in-between rounds.

Look, the fight was over at maybe half past 9 in the evening, or maybe 10?

Well, we finally got it on TV way past midnight—or approximately, two hours after the fight.

This is not the first time this has happened—a flood of commercials accompanying a Pacquiao fight. The first time it happened was when Pacquiao fought Juan Manuel Marquez last May.

Well, Pacquiao has become the most saleable athlete around.

Maybe, in the future, it wouldn't hurt if we air hundreds and hundreds of seconds of commercials during the replay of a Pacquiao fight? I think that's fair enough, considering that those watching it knew already who won the fight.

But spare the fight when shown live.

It's about time we put an end to glaring greediness. Isn't there a law limiting commercials in a TV show?

That said, let's now go to the fight.

The first time I saw Fahsan throw a punch—it looked like a wild, aimless roundabout—I knew it would be over in less than five rounds. I remember telling Rene Jose and Rey Pacheco of RMN's 558 "Doble Banda" radio program in an interview before the fight that Pacquiao would win in five rounds.

"Boy, was I lucky again," I told the two guys yesterday.

"No, your guess was educated," said Rene Jose.

Rene and Rey noticed that Pacquiao seemed sluggish and asked my opinion about their opinion.

Oh, well, he seemed sluggish, yes. But didn't he cram for this fight? The fact Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer, had to rush here was proof of Pacquiao's state of un-readiness due to the fighter's reported constant late-night adventures out of the gym.

Had Pacquiao been in tip-top shape, Fahsan would not have lasted one round.

But who needs a quick finish?

Pacquiao was the last person to need that. Against a patsy like Fahsan, Pacquiao could have still won by KO even with his one hand tied to his waist.

The best boxers of Thailand are in Thailand. Fahsan leaving Thailand was just perfect: he was what the doctor ordered for a Pacquiao tune-up.

Enough of tomfoolery, please?

greenwich

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Woods back on the prowl, rules World Challenge tilt

AFP
WOODS: Solid finish to an off season

THOUSAND OAKS, California—Tiger Woods shot a bogey-free 5-under-par 66 on Sunday to overtake a fading Colin Montgomerie and win the $5.25 million World Challenge.

"It was so exciting that the things I was working on started to come together," he said. "It's nice not to have a big laundry list out there (heading into next season)." Woods won in 2001 but had finished second the last two years.

He started the last round tied for second, two strokes adrift of Montgomerie, but he birdied three of the first five holes while Montgomery bogeyed two of the first four.

While Scotland's Montgomerie managed a par 71, Woods vaulted to the top of the leaderboard.

He held off Ireland's Padraig Harrington and finished at 16-under 268, two shots better than Harrington.

It was a solid finish to a disappointing season for Woods, who did not win a stroke play event on the PGA Tour this year and was unseated as world No. 1 for the first time in five years.

"I had to take baby steps and I did that all year," said Woods, who reconstructed his swing.

"I was working in the right direction. Sometimes it might have been three, four holes in one round that I played great, the way I know I can, and then the rest of it wasn't so good.

"Then eventually it became nine holes and 18, then 36 and 54, now a whole tournament."

Throughout the season, Woods often claimed he was "close" to regaining the form that made him golf's irrepressible force. He proved he was right with stroke play wins here and in Japan.last month.

With a two-shot cushion, Woods parred his way in and collected the $1.25 million first prize, all of which will go to his many charitable foundations. *AFP*

V'roman, Pagunsan show way in ITT golf

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG—Knocking approach shots close to the pins and putting with confidence, Carito Villaroman shot a five-under 67 yesterday for a two-shot lead heading into the final 18 holes of the first Ideal Travel and Tours Invitational Pro-Am here.

VILLAROMAN

The 35-year-old former world junior champion scattered six birdies against a bogey in a 33-34 card at Canlubang's North course to hold off Richard Sinfuego, Mars Pucay and the favored Antonio Lascuña, who all turned in identical 69s.

Juvic Pagunsan, deprived of sleep and all, signed for a 68 to lead the amateur division by four over World Am teammate Michael Bibat, while Rey Alit turned in a level 72 for a five-stroke lead in senior play.

The final round will be played at the shorter South layout today.

Villaroman abandoned a belly putter he used on the Asian Tour in favor of an old, conventional one which worked wonders.

"I felt that I had a chance to make any putt I hit," said Villaroman.

Playing after a long overnight ride from Baguio, Pagunsan comfortably shows the way among amateurs despite a double bogey on his last hole, the par-5 9th, which he tried to reach in two. Instead, he hit into the lagoon guarding the green.

Pagunsan made the turn at two-under and then birdied Nos. 1, 2 and 3. He moved to six-under on the 326-yard par-4 eighth after a sand wedge shot landed within inches of the hole for a gimme birdie.

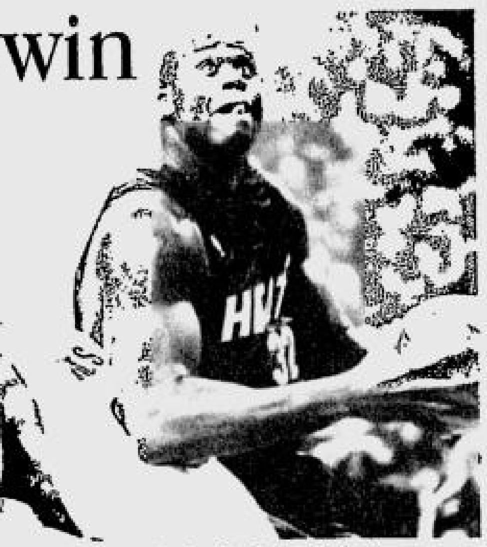
Boyet Saragoza was a stroke behind Bibat in third after a 73, while Jun Bernis turned in a 74 for solo fourth spot.

Unheralded Jorge Abad shot a 77 and trailed Alit by five, while 57-year-old national coach Roger Retuerto submitted a 78 marred by a two-stroke penalty for hitting the wrong ball on No. 9.

Lascuña was the only one who turned in a bogey-free card, outshining the 69 of Pucay who rallied with four birdies in a torrid five-hole stretch in the back nine.

Armando Eso, Cookie La'O and former Philippine Open champion Robert Pactolerin were tied for fifth after 72s with Benjie Magada and journeyman Mario Manubay occupying joint eighth after 73s.

Heat sear Raptors for 4th straight win


O'NEAL (right) gets fouled by Loren Woods. REUTERS

NEW YORK—Shaquille O'Neal and Dwyane Wade each scored 20 points and added nine rebounds as the Miami Heat notched their fourth consecutive win dumping the struggling Toronto Raptors, 106-98, on Sunday.

The duo proved too much for the under-sized and injury-hit Raptors, who have now lost seven straight since a win over the Heat last month.

With injured all-star swingman Vince Carter watching from the bench with a strained Achilles tendon, the Raptors turned in a gritty performance in front of a near sellout home crowd of 19,202, trailing by just five points with a little over a minute to play.

But they could not close the gap any further, Damon Jones nailing a three-pointer and a pair of free throws to stretch the Miami lead to nine with 45 seconds to play.

In New York, Jamal Crawford had 31 points and Stephon Marbury chipped in with 25 as the Knicks brought the Denver Nuggets' four game winning streak to a halt with a 107-96 win.

Knicks fans also got their first look at guard Allan Houston, who had nine points in his home debut after missing the first 16 games with a knee injury.

In Washington, Larry Hughes had 15 second half points as the Wizards ripped the New Orleans Hornets, 88-69.

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson scored a season-high 40 points and added 10 assists to lead the 76ers past the Milwaukee Bucks 107-101. *Reuters*

Complete Results:

New York 107, Denver 96; Miami 106, Toronto 98; Washington 88, New Orleans 69; Philadelphia 107, Milwaukee 101; Portland 96, Utah 88; Golden State 99, Charlotte 87; LA Lakers 105, Orlando 98.

SAMSUNG GOLF

Deen opens 3-peat bid

CEBU CITY—Eric Deen starts his drive for a rare three-peat in the Championship division as the final eliminations leg of the Samsung Amateur Tour Friday gets going today at the Cebu Country Club here.

Standing in the way of Deen's bid are his regular club rivals Carl Almario and Jovi Neri, as well as the duo of Tristan Tabanas and Lino Retuerto, who are both mainstays of reigning PAL Interclub champion Del Monte.

One player who could muddle up the race is former national amateur champion Artemio Murakami, who had registered for the tournament but remains a doubtful entry. He is fresh off a stint in the Fil-Am wars in Baguio.

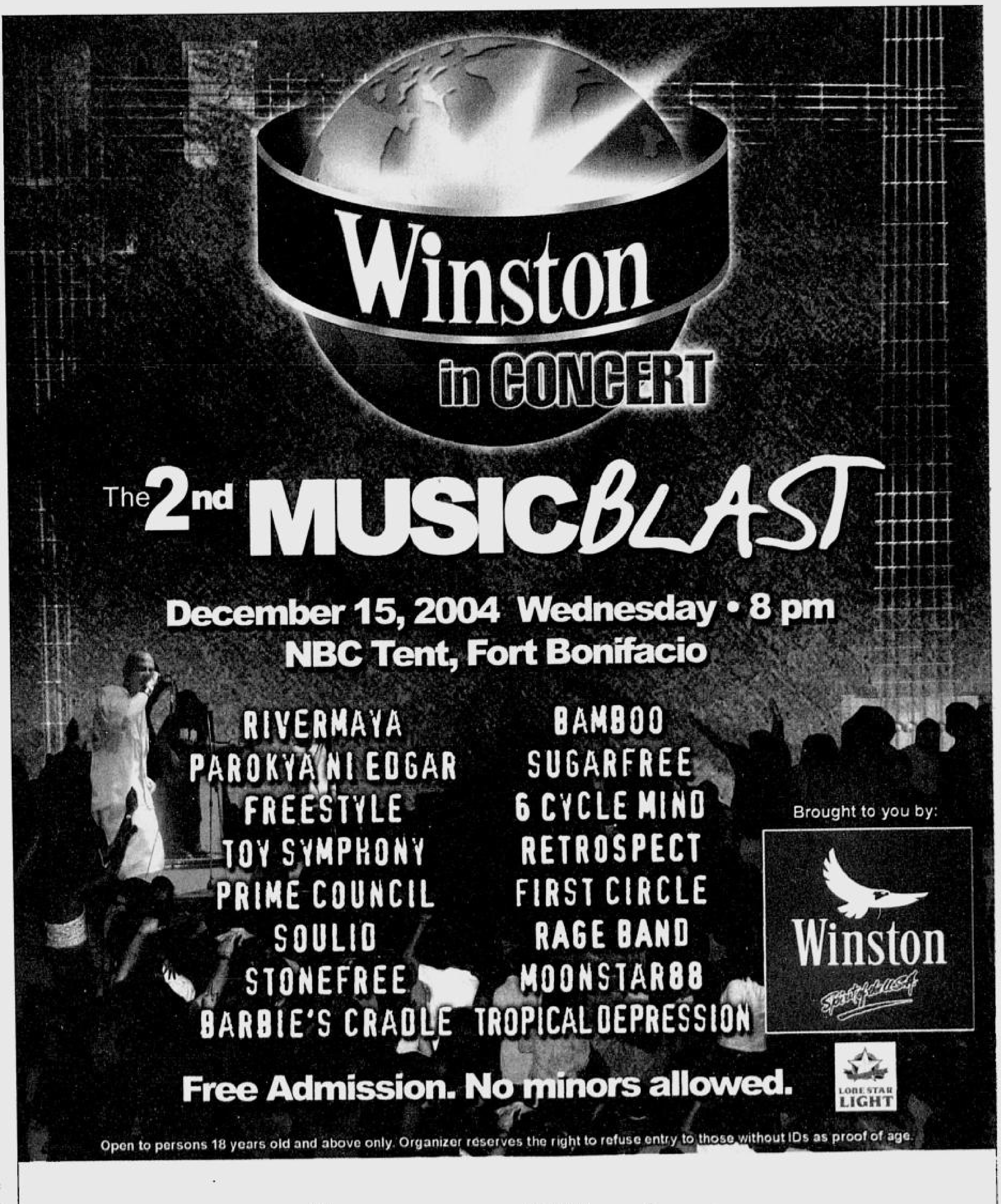
The winner here will join an elite group of qualifiers for the grand finals of the course-hopping series slated Feb. 8-11 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. It includes Juvic Pagunsan, Jun Bernis, Jay Bayron, Boyet Saragoza, Raymund Sangil and Kim Chang-hoi

The Samsung Tour is also sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, C-Lium Fiber, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines, adidas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport, and Rogin-E. Killer-Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are media partners.

Of the eight divisions to be disputed, only the men's championship is for 72 holes while the rest is for 36 holes and will be held Thursday and Friday.

Part of the 36-hole schedule is the ladies Class A where national player Jayvie Agojo will be competing for the first time but is solidly favored to come out the winner. The 18-year-old Agojo has been very steady in her recent tournaments, including the World Amateur in Puerto Rico and the Manila Ladies at Wack Wack.

"This week's Cebu leg caps another great year for Samsung's support for local golf," said Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group. "The regular appearance of players from the national ranks is proof that they recognize the high level of play."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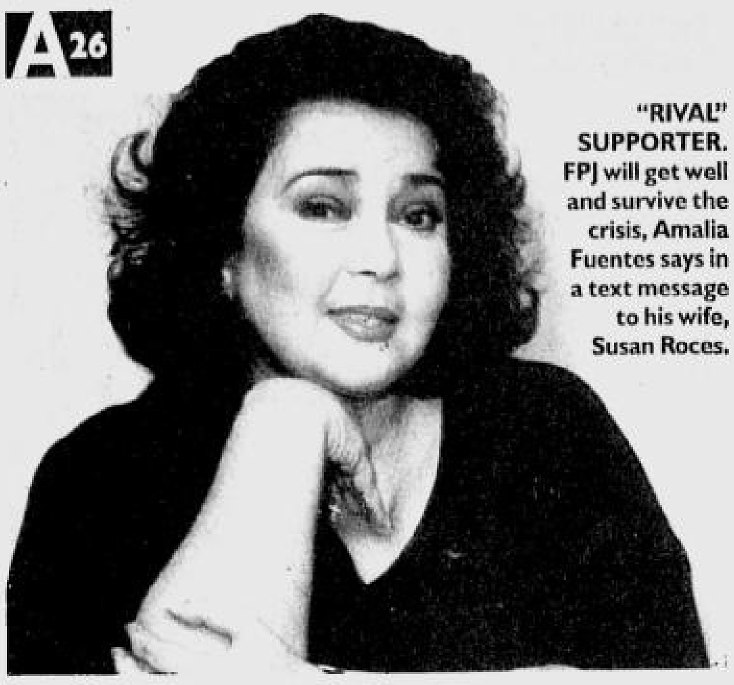

"RIVAL" SUPPORTER. FPJ will get well and survive the crisis, Amalia Fuentes says in a text message to his wife, Susan Roces.

'Tatay' Ron cooked gambas for Juday

From page A27

ery. The whole country loves him."

Former movie star Amalia Fuentes, who was Susan Roces' perennial No. 1 rival for the title queen of Philippine movies, said she has not visited FPJ in the hospital "because I want to give him and Susan some space."

"I sent Susan a text message instead," said Amalia. "I told her that I know Ronnie [Poe's nickname] will get well, and that they will survive this crisis."

DID YOU KNOW...

Two weeks after he underwent an operation to correct his sleeping disorder, Optical Media Board chair **Edu Manzano** is working again. He conducted another raid against video pirates in Quiapo Wednesday morning. The host of the ABS-CBN noontime show, "MTB: Ang Saya Saya," returned to the program early this week.

***

"Can you imagine going into a room with all of these guys? I felt like it was the first day of school." —**Catherine Zeta-Jones**, on joining the male-dominated cast of the new movie, "Ocean's Twelve," via AP Television News.

EDU MANZANO

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday December 14, 2004
8:30 pm
TUESDAYS
10:00 pm
Wow Mali
ABC iba tayo
The Probe Team Documentaries
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Sprits	It Might Be You	Lovers In Paris	Krystala	Hiram	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	Bida Si Mister Bida Si Misis		Insider	Pipol
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision		APEC Primer 2		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Muscani Cup 2003				Auto Focus	
ABC 5	Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	KNN	Anime Ring Kasho				Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Race Hour	Billboard On-Air		
GMA 7	Leya (2:45PM)	Joyride (3:15PM)	Snow Angel (3:45PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15PM)		Bahay Mo Ba To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			The Working President	J2J	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Crossing Jordan		John Doe		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Retro TV		Global Family Series		Entrepinoy	Good Take	Travel	IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
Solar		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Marstael	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Meet My Folks		The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	Knock First	One Tree Hill		The O.C		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Cinema One		Gimik The Reunion				Tanging Yaman				D'Uragons				Bakit Ba Ganyan? Ewan Ko Nga Ba Darling?				Noon At Ngayon	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	Fightbox	Smallville		Angel		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		The Men's Room
AXN		The Amazing Race		Maximum Exposure		Fear Factor		Rave	Rave	Boomtown		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Alias		The Amazing Race		AXN Shakedown	
Star World	Becker	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Road Trip		The Apprentice		UC Undercover/ Justin Timberlake Down Home In Memphis		Friends	Road Trip
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Thrill Seeker		The Sea Hunters		Treasure Seekers		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Thrill Seeker		The Sea Hunters	
Solar Sports		US Open 9-Ball C'ships			GWS ep.48	IBF Dutch Open '04		Boxing - Manny Pacquiao vs. 3k Battery					NBA TV Daily	NBA Dallas vs Chicago (replay)					NBA TV Daily
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens Of	The Fid	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	It's Good To Be	A Second Look		Look For Less	Style Star	Road & Track	Back To Basics	Planet Parent	Hot Off The Grill
HBO			Freedom Fighter (3:20PM)			Ghost Cat (5:15PM)				Fletch (6:50PM)			Kangaroo Jack			Sex And The City '02 Special	Carnivale Finale Special		
Star Movies				Dust Devil			Dawg (5:45PM)			Unfaithful (7:05PM)				Les Miserables				Arachnophobia (11:15PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				Eng. Premier League Highlights 04/05 World Pool Masters '04 Premier Snooker League '02				Sportscenter Taiwan	NFL Football - Kansas vs. Tennessee						Sportscenter Taiwan				
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-talkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	Rolling Thunder (2:45PM)			Lethal Tender (4:15PM)			Jason and the Argonauts (5:45PM)				Gold Diggers: The Secret Of Bear Mountain			Dead Again				Blue Crush (10:50PM)	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	We Were The Mulvaneys				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Judging Amy		Grownups			Wire In The Blood (10:35PM)		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Civilizations				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
MTV Philippines		MTV Supahstar		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominees Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Lokal		Non-Stop Hits	MTV Bolahan	TRL		Punk'D	Wildboyz	VH1 Hits! Video Collection	
Sports Plus					Porsche md 11&12	Superbowl7 Dolphins vs Redskins		This Is The PGA Tour		NFL						FED Cup Finals day1			
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3:15PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	We Are One Body	Web Of Faith	

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'Tatay' Ron cooked gambas

CAMPAIGN SEASON. The actor watched what he ate and did not even take liquor, says his May election running mate, former Sen. Loren Legarda.

From page A28

coma and has multiple organ system involvement."

"I heard of what happened to him last Sunday," Judy Ann said yesterday. "I didn't believe it at first because nasty rumors are common in show business. I had to confirm it first. I was hoping that other people would tell me it wasn't true. It was true, after all.

Keepsake

"I was stunned for a few minutes, and then I grew sad," she added. "I couldn't believe it."

Judy Ann said FPJ loves to hang out at her restaurant bar, Café Caribana, in Quezon City.

"The night before we opened, he even cooked his version of gambas for me," Judy Ann recalled. "I asked him to cut the ribbon on opening day but he couldn't make it, so he visited me the night before.

"*Tatay* Ron calls me *anak* (daughter)," she added. "He gave me a bottle of Calming Waters from Bath and Body Wash while we were filming 'Isusumbong Kita.' This and a backpack were his birthday gifts to me. I didn't throw away the bottle. I want to preserve it because *Tatay* Ron gave it to me. I've had it for five years now."

Healing oil

Former Sen. Loren Legarda, FPJ's vice presidential candidate in the May elections, said she immediately went to the hospital last Sunday after she heard of FPJ's stroke.

"I brought healing oil and a Padre Pio prayer card," said the former broadcaster and lawmaker. "I gave them to his wife, Susan [Roces]. Then I embraced Susan and told her that miracles can happen. She was very calm the whole time I was there."

Movie industry leader and former producer Marichu Vera-Perez and one of FPJ's sisters kept Susan company in the hospital, Legarda said.

"Hearing the news left me weak," said Loren. "I know him to be someone who's very watchful of what he eats. He hardly ate pork and rice during the campaign. He didn't even drink [liquor]. He also kept saying he couldn't wait to get back to his exercise routine.

Gentle man

"Whenever we would eat together, he would jokingly ask the waiter to fill up my plate with rice," she recalled. "He said I ate too much rice."

FPJ is a "kind and gentle man," said Loren. "What we should do now is to pray for his recov-

'TATAY'/A26

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		6 BIRTH		
		7 ALEXANDER		

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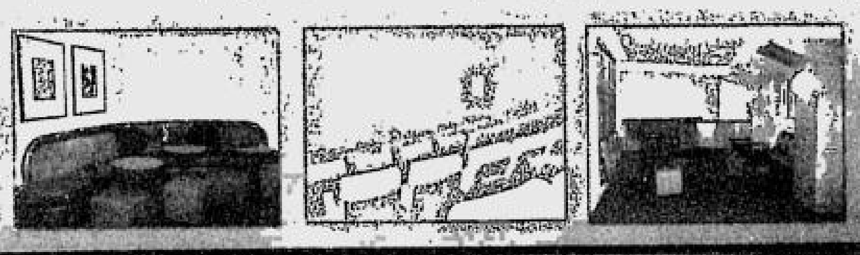

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RE-ISSUE

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LoveMall!

'Tatay' Ron cooked gambas for Juday

Poe thought running mate Loren ate too much rice

"ANAK." Judy Ann Santos and FPJ became close when they did "Isusumbong Kita sa Tatay Ko."

By Marinel R. Cruz

I KNOW *Tatay* Ron to be health-conscious. Of all people, why does it have to be *Tatay* Ron?"

A grieving Judy Ann Santos was sharing with INQUIRER Entertainment her grief over the condition of actor and former presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., who played her *tatay* (father) in the action-comedy film "Isusumbong Kita sa Tatay Ko."

FPJ suffered a "severe brain attack" or stroke and has been confined at the neuro intensive care unit of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City since early Saturday, according to a medical bulletin signed by the actor's neurologist, Abdias V. Aquino.

Yesterday at about 1 p.m., Aquino reported that FPJ "is still in

'TATAY'/A27

When top . . .

From page A29

"We would highly appreciate decent entertainment on TV, which is viewed by people of all ages. Wholesome dancing is great not only for the body but also for the soul, and should be encouraged, especially on television."

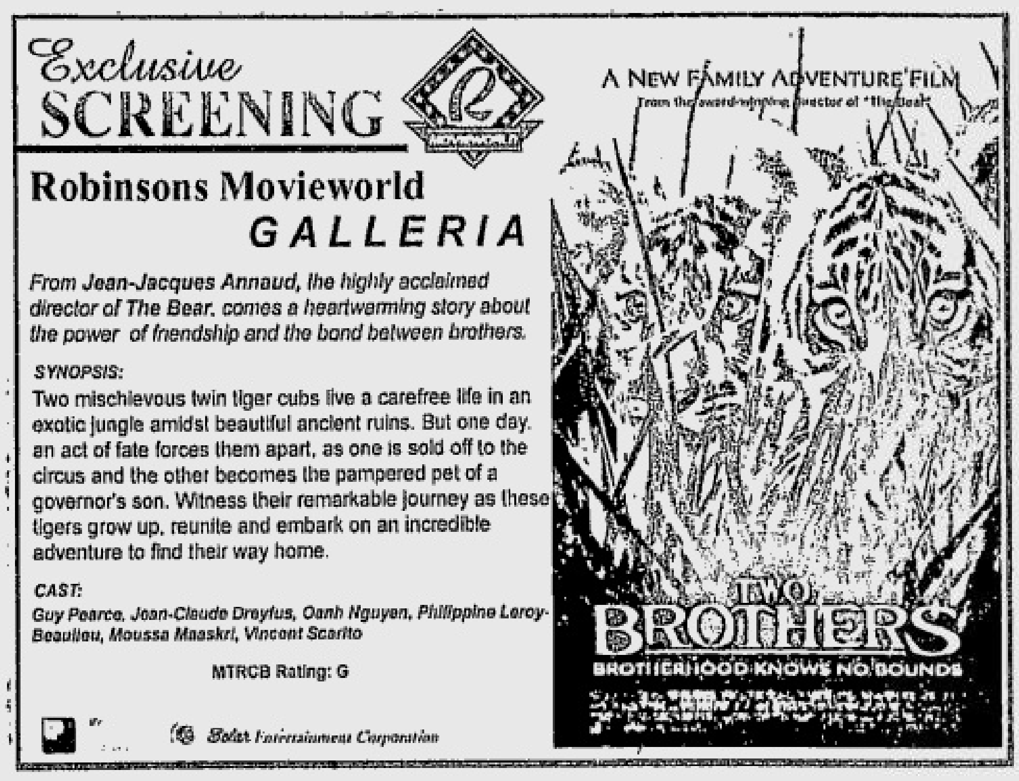
Discovery Channel

DISCOVERY Channel, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in Asia-Pacific this year, took home the coveted cable and satellite channel of the year at the Asian Television Awards in Singapore last Dec. 2.

Discovery also received nine nominations for awards in seven categories, and clinched the top spot in two categories—Best Documentary, 31 Minutes or More for "Mysterious Hanging Coffins of China," and Best Entertainment Presenter for "Lonely Planet Six Degrees'" host Asha Gill.

The channel also won the runner-up citation for Best Reality Program, and was highly commended for Best Cinematography, both for the popular series, "Sync or Swim—Bali."

Discovery reaches 450 million homes in over 160 countries. In Asia-Pacific, it now reaches over 120 million households across 23 countries, in eight different languages.



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From Jean-Jacques Annaud, the highly acclaimed director of The Bear, comes a heartwarming story about the power of friendship and the bond between brothers.
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Two mischievous twin tiger cubs live a carefree life in an exotic jungle amidst beautiful ancient ruins. But one day, an act of fate forces them apart, as one is sold off to the circus and the other becomes the pampered pet of a governor's son. Witness their remarkable journey as these tigers grow up, reunite and embark on an incredible adventure to find their way home.
CAST:
Guy Pearce, Jean-Claude Dreyfus, Oanh Nguyen, Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Moussa Maaskri, Vincent Scarito
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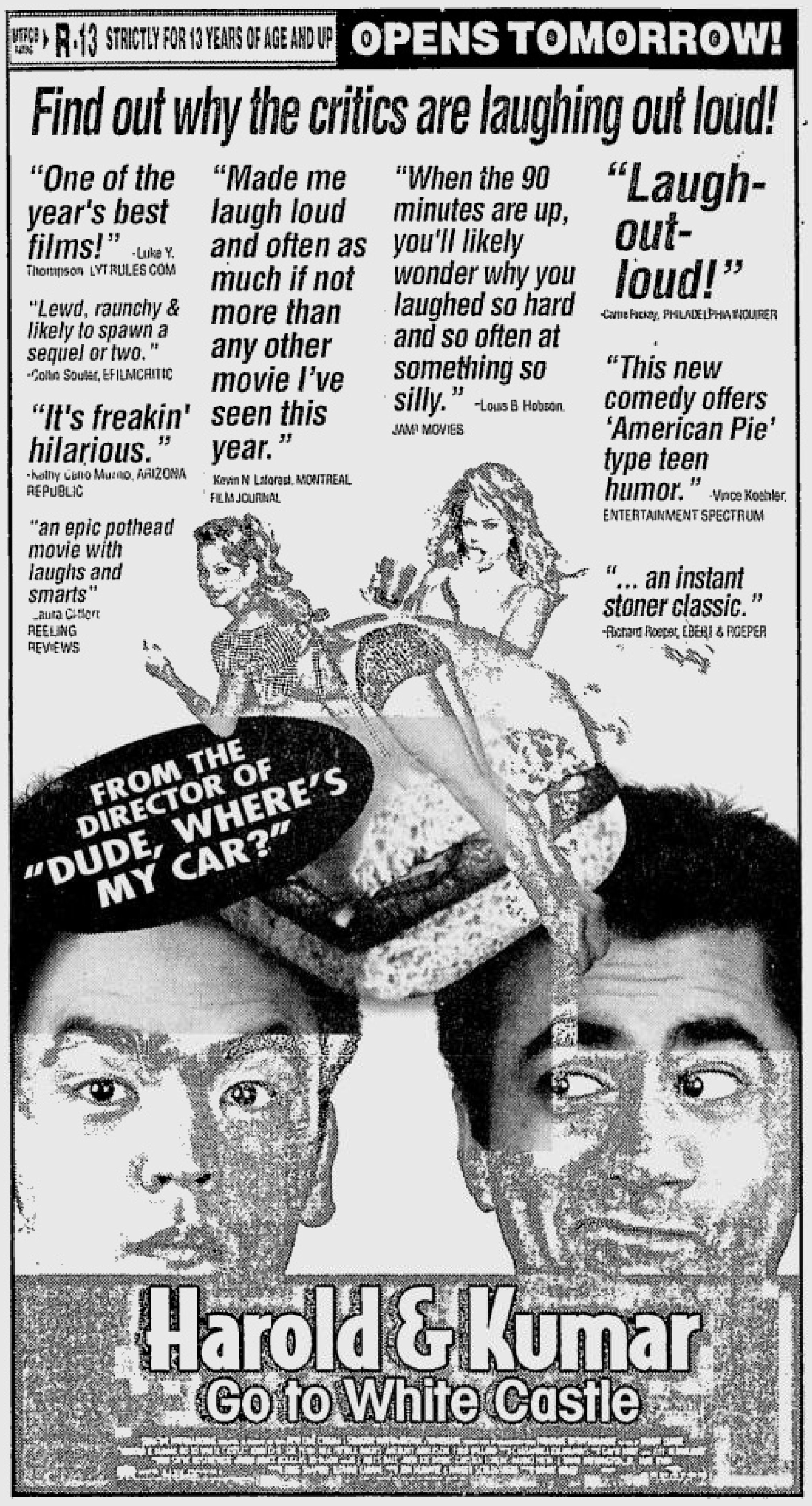
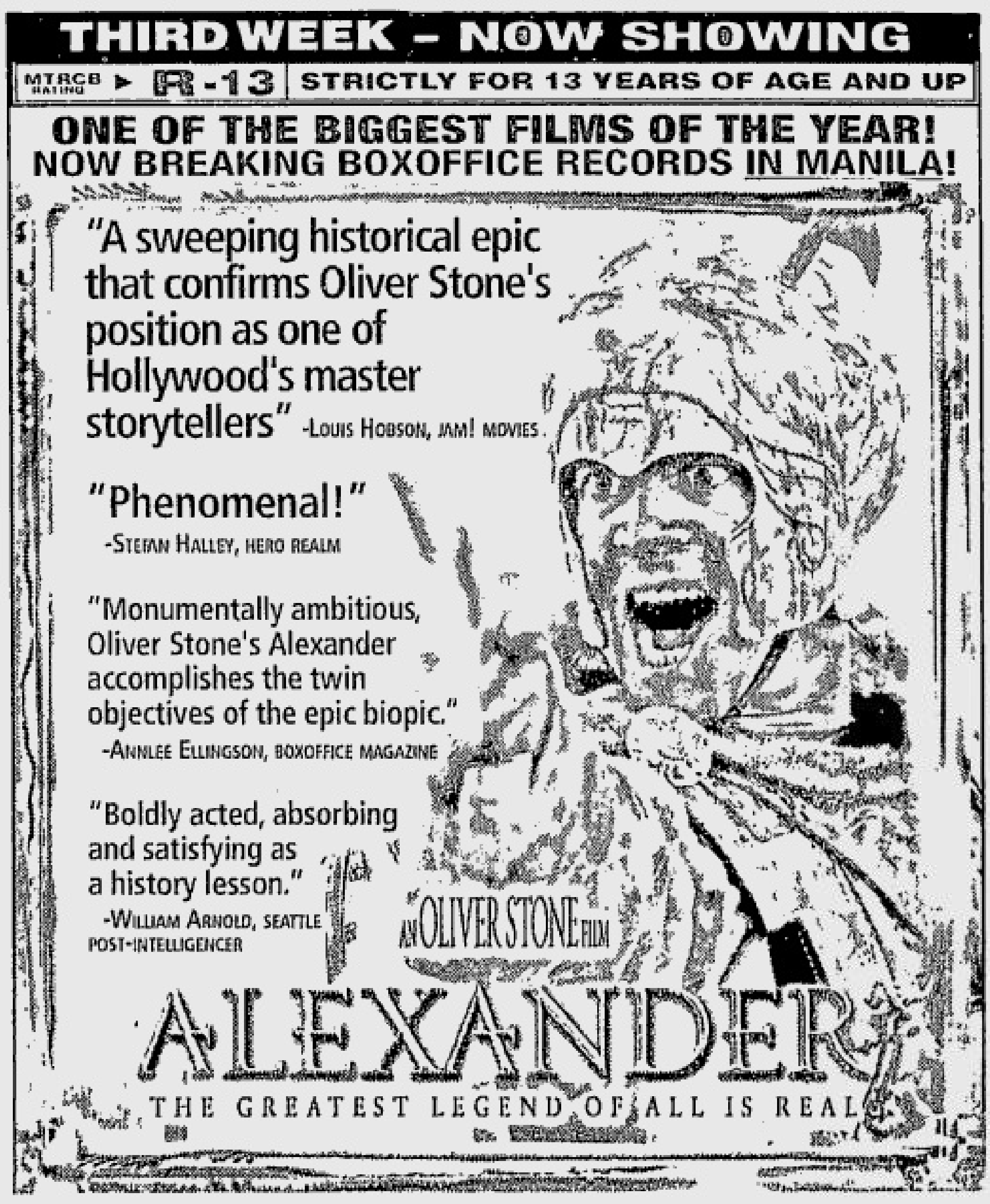
A NEW FAMILY ADVENTURE FILM
From the award-winning director of "The Bear"
TWO BROTHERS
BROTHERHOOD KNOWS NO BOUNDS



MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP OPENS TOMORROW!
Find out why the critics are laughing out loud!
"One of the year's best films!" -Luke Y. Thompson, LYTRULES.COM
"Lewd, raunchy & likely to spawn a sequel or two." -Collin Souter, EFILMCRITIC
"It's freakin' hilarious." -Kathy Cano Murillo, ARIZONA REPUBLIC
"an epic pothead movie with laughs and smarts" -Laura Clifford, REELING REVIEWS
"Made me laugh loud and often as much if not more than any other movie I've seen this year." Kevin N. Laforest, MONTREAL FILM JOURNAL
"When the 90 minutes are up, you'll likely wonder why you laughed so hard and so often at something so silly." -Louis B. Hobson, JAM! MOVIES
"Laugh-out-loud!" -Carrie Rickey, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
"This new comedy offers 'American Pie' type teen humor." -Vince Koehler, ENTERTAINMENT SPECTRUM
"... an instant stoner classic." -Richard Roeper, EBERT & ROEPER

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR?"
Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle



THIRD WEEK – NOW SHOWING
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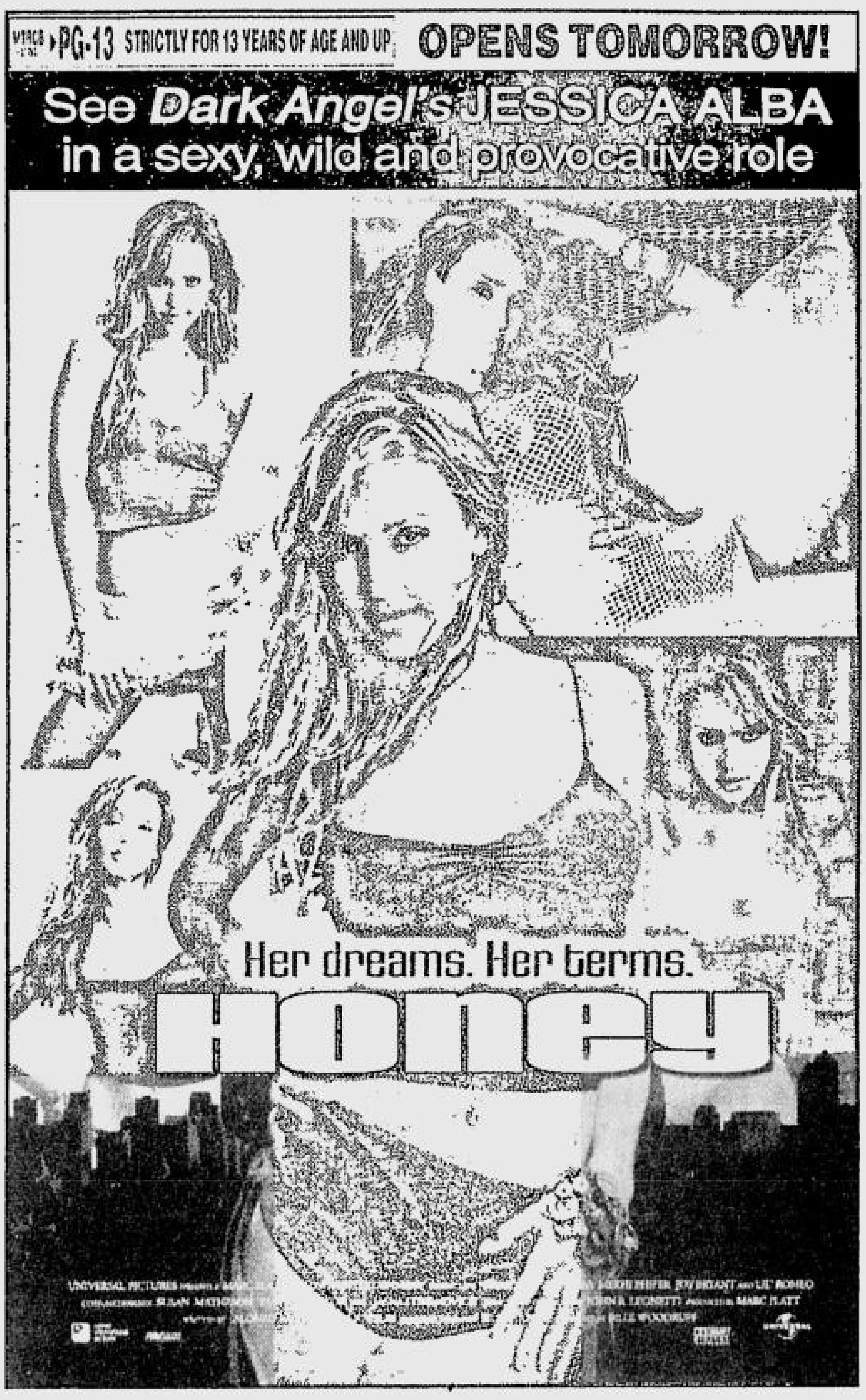
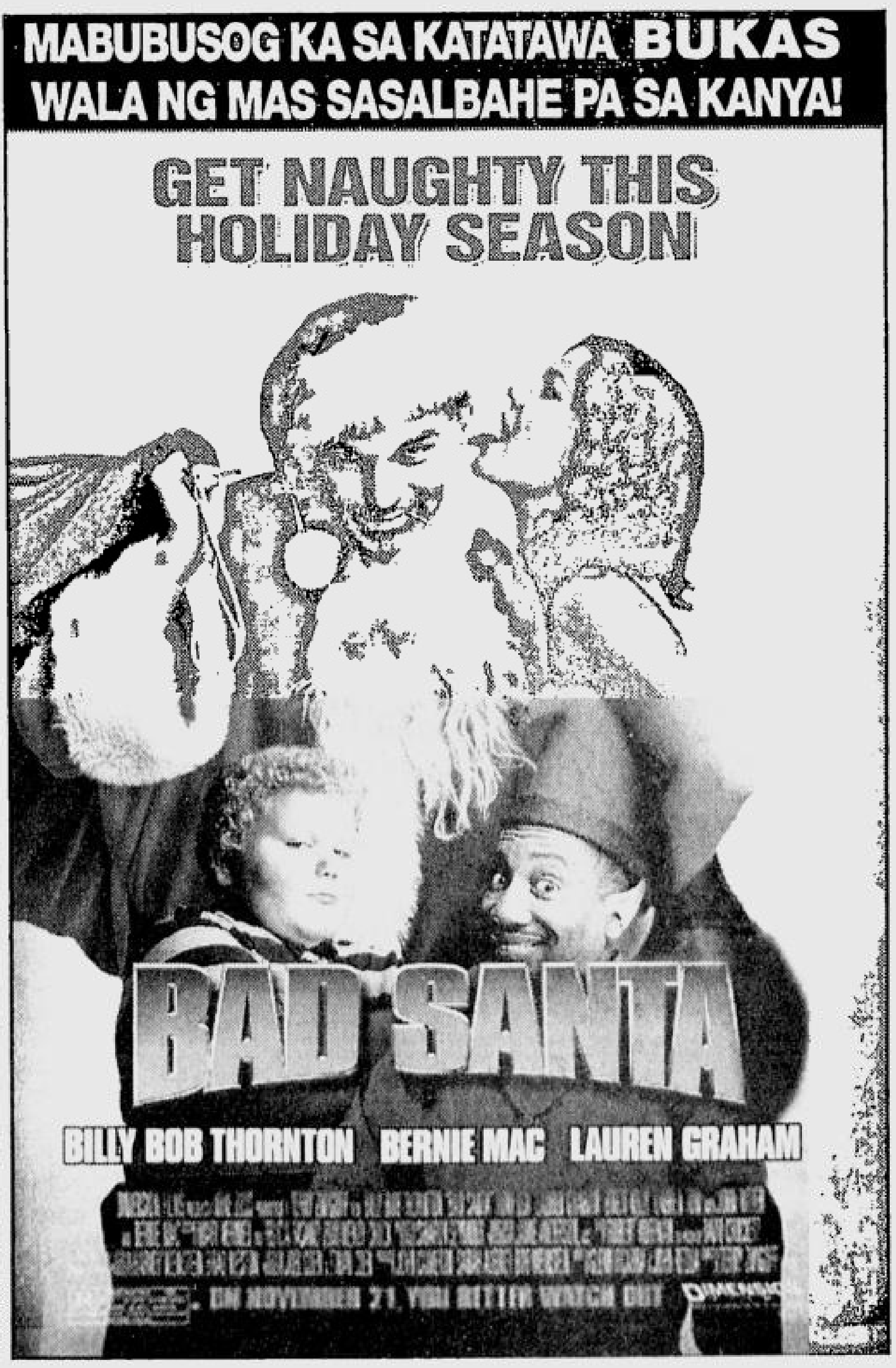
"Phenomenal!" -Stefan Halley, HERO REALM
"Monumentally ambitious, Oliver Stone's Alexander accomplishes the twin objectives of the epic biopic." -Annlee Ellingson, BOXOFFICE MAGAZINE
"Boldly acted, absorbing and satisfying as a history lesson." -William Arnold, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER



MTRCB RATING PG-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP OPENS TOMORROW!
See Dark Angel's JESSICA ALBA in a sexy, wild and provocative role



MABUBUSOG KA SA KATATAWA BUKAS
WALA NG MAS SASALBAHE PA SA KANYA!
GET NAUGHTY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

BAD SANTA
BILLY BOB THORNTON BERNIE MAC LAUREN GRAHAM
ON NOVEMBER 21, YOU BETTER WATCH OUT

Those gorgeous guys Grant and Firth

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I WAS swamped with e-mail after I shared some highlights of my one-on-one interview with **Renee Zellweger** in my previous column. The rest of our tete-a-tete will be aired on Entertainment Central anytime soon. Many readers wanted more info about Renee's two gorgeous leading men, **Hugh Grant** and **Colin Firth** so here goes...

Firth sees the new Bridget Jones chapter as throwing a playful wrench onto the typical gauzy and starry-eyed movie romance. "There's a reason that romantic fairy tales end where they do, because if they went on, they would start to get messy, if not completely grisly," he laughs. "But we all know that the reality is quite different. We know that the things that first attract you to a person are the same things that later drive you crazy. Two people who come from completely different social backgrounds are not going to be able to help but judge one another. And because 'Edge of Reason' addresses these things, I think the film creates a portrait of a relationship that is very comical yet also quite alive and real."

Says producer **Jonathan Cavendish**, "Colin and Hugh are the two worst fighters I've ever seen—which is why they are absolutely hilarious in the climactic fight scene."

Girly Englishmen

"The funny thing is that Hugh and I have only ever worked with each other in these fight sequences," notes Firth. "But we made the decision right away this time not to stage anything. We simply showed up that morning and started pulling each other's hair, kicking each other, and it was all completely natural to me."

"Middle class Englishmen don't fight at all really and when they do it's a pretty pitiful sight—girly, messy, unbutch—and that's what we were trying to capture," adds Grant.

He found that, upon returning to the role of Cleaver, he had all too little trouble sliding back under the character's skin. "I don't think I'm quite as black as Cleaver is in his soul, but I certainly share some of the tastes and frailties," Grant claims. Cleaver captures the indescribable "bad boy" essence that women desire—the man we don't want to marry but, in Bridget's language, "we definitely want to shag."

TRIVIA: As I wrote in my column last week, Renee was clutching a small yellow teddy bear (in a cowboy oufit) when she faced the Asian press in Westin Taipei's ballroom. Nope, it was not from any of her admirers. The cute teddy was a gift from her brother and sister-in-law. Renee said, "I travel all around with this teddy bear. Call it my lucky charm." Right that minute I bet all the guys in the room wanted to turn into a teddy bear.

Everybody went home with a touch of Bridget Jones. United International Pictures gave away cute pajama pants and tank top in Bridget's signature colors, pink and purple—perhaps to wish everyone more ecstatic bedroom scenes a la Bridget. It used to be "keeping up with the Joneses." Now it's keepin up with Ms Jones.

MTV Summit

FOR THE second year in a row, MTV, the world's largest television network, gathered a mammoth crowd, an estimated 50,000, on Dec. 1 for the country's biggest concert for a cause: the MTV Staying Alive Music Summit for HIV/AIDS.

In a marathon show held in the Bonifacio Global City Open Field that began at 4 p.m. and lasted until 2 a.m. the next day, over 30 local and international acts performed for the enthusiastic audience that stayed until the end of the show.

A slew of local actors and TV personalities also turned up to lend support to the advocacy. The concert special premieres on MTV Philippines on Dec. 18, 2 p.m., with replays on Dec. 19 at 10 p.m., Dec. 24 at 9 p.m., and Dec. 25 at 2 p.m.

GMA 7 reacts

THIS came from **Jayce Perlas**, representing GMA Network:

Hi Dolly Ann!

This is regarding your column item ("Cavite 'revolt'") on a reader's email that said a local Cavite newsletter had claimed "Startruck Survivor" **Ailyn** was "unfairly" eliminated because she was not among the weakest based on juror's votes and text votes; and nor was she voted out by her fellow survivors. The newsletter is said to have claimed that the elimination was reminiscent of a past "filmfest scam."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Ailyn was eliminated because she *did* garner the lowest score of all the candidates for that given period. The total score is comprised of 50 percent juror's votes and 50 percent text votes.

Also, the peer's vote has no bearing on the total scores.

It has never been our practice to play favorites among our the "Starstruck" aspirants. We make sure all of them are given equal opportunity. This has contributed much to the continued success of the program.

For feedback, email wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com.

THE LAWYER (left), the liar (right), and the problem, according to the movie stills.

When top TV news anchors resign

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

2004 is turning out to be the year for top US TV news anchors to resign, after more than 20 years of reporting the events of the day. **Dan Rather** was the first to announce his resignation, scheduled for early next year. But **Tom Brokaw** of "NBC Nightly News" beat him to it last week, when he bade goodbye to his loyal viewers in a dramatic and emotional way.

However, in keeping with the objectivity and lack of emotion required of news anchors in the States, Brokaw expressed his personal feelings, not on the newscast, but the day before, on NBC's "Today" show.

It was a truly memorable TV moment, as Brokaw was toasted by his newscast's staff after they praised him for his exceptional intelligence, dedication, courage, objectivity, and professional work ethic.

For his part, Brokaw allowed his eyes to mist up as he expressed thanks for "the privilege" of reporting the news nightly for two decades.

We trust that Brokaw's final statement will remind other news anchors of the importance and significance of their job, and the great sense of responsibility and good judgment that it requires.

All too often, less principled and enlightened news anchors end up thinking of themselves as "stars," and behaving accordingly. This is both pathetic and tragic, because it is so ill-informed and self-serving.

The truth of the matter is, the only "star" in a newscast is *the news itself*, so anchors should know their place!

Besides, it's a very good place to be because, Brokaw is right, it's a real privilege to be able to inform millions of viewers about what's happening in the world on a daily basis.

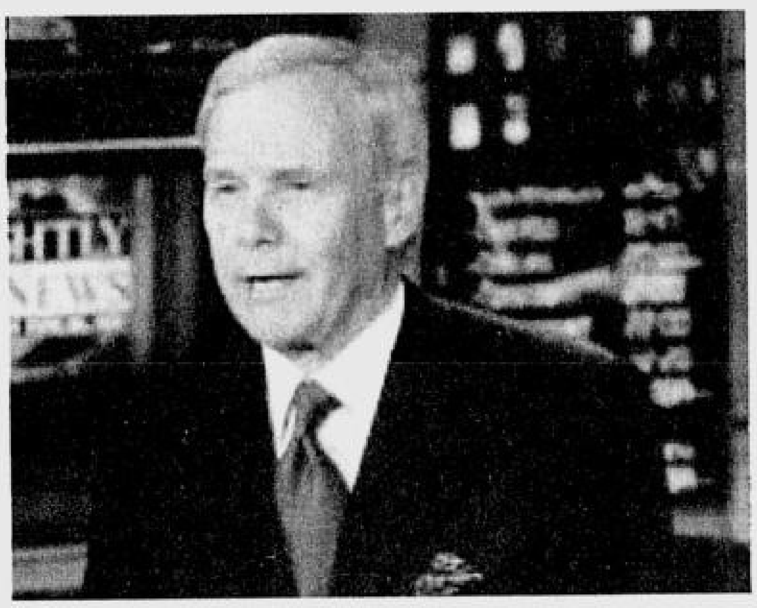
TV news people should keep reminding themselves that what they're reporting from day to day is actually history in the making. And that news reportage has become even more important today, because the world is now much more complex and difficult to make sense of. So, viewers need TV news people who can help them figure out the resonances and repercussions of the day's events as these unfold.

Alas, some smug and lazy anchors are found wanting in this regard, which is why viewers value true professionals like Brokaw and Rather, and are sad to see them go. They shudder to think: Who will take their place?

The possible replacements have their strengths but are relatively untested, so the jury is still out on whether they can measure up to the standard set by their now retired or retiring seniors.

The good news is that Brokaw is retiring only from his news anchor post, but will continue to report on special stories that require his level of good judgment and expertise.

He's been replaced at NBC News by **Bryan Williams**, who's been performing creditably but not impressively to date. Well, let's give him more time to rise to the demands of his job. After all, he has inordinately big shoes to fill.



TOM Brokaw

'Reporting the news is a privilege,' this pro says –and his counterparts in Manila should listen

Feedback

FROM **Analyn Aseballo**, **Arlene Pateño**, **Charlene Estrada** and **Jennifer Zuñiga** of Calamba, Laguna: "The ad of Crissa about the Teen Dance synergy competition recently caught our attention, especially when we read the mechanics: 'The dance routine must be free from suggestive choreography and sexually offensive movements.'

"This is a welcome reminder to our young people to be more conscious about excesses in their movements when they dance. This is a good consideration that the noontime shows on TV should also abide by, especially their sexy dancers who are an atrocious influence on young viewers.

WHEN/ A28

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CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS MTRCB Rating: G
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BUNNY GUARDS SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
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FPJ asked his siblings to come home for Christmas

'Da King' planning 'teleserye,' preserving old films

BOUNDLESS GENEROSITY. Poe didn't want it known that the truckloads of relief goods for typhoon victims came from him, says old friend Josie Tagle. JOAN BONDOC

By Nini Valera

FERNANDO Poe Jr. wanted his siblings who live abroad to come home for Christmas.

"He was telling us he asked them to spend Christmas here," Josie Tagle, a longtime friend of the actor, told INQUIRER Entertainment in Filipino. "He just came up with the idea one day about having a reunion with them.

"That was the first time he talked about how he wanted his siblings to be here for Christmas," Tagle added. "Then this happened. *Nangilabot ako* (I had goose bumps)."

FPJ has five siblings—the late Andy Poe, Conrad, Freddie, Elizabeth and Jennifer, according to Tagle.

Saturday night, Poe was rushed to St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City where he now lies in a coma in the hospital's intensive care unit. *(See related story on A28)*

Tagle is among Poe's tight circle of friends from the movie industry who could get near the reclusive actor and exchange banter with him. She was only 15 when Poe tapped her to play a bit role in one of his movies, starting off her career as a professional movie talent and character actress.

Vick's for headache

Tagle is now 52 and devoted to the acknowledged king of Philippine movies, whom she described as the kindest man on earth.

"We were wrapping packages for the typhoon victims when he complained of headache," Tagle narrated. "I told him to go home and rest and leave us to finish the packing.

"That was last Tuesday," she added. "That was the last time I saw him healthy."

She said FPJ had asked for Vick's Vaporub to soothe his raging headache, which had been plaguing him for about two weeks before he suffered a stroke last Saturday.

"We have been preparing the relief goods for several days at the FPJ compound [on Del Monte Avenue in Quezon City]," Tagle related. "He was always with us and actually doing the job himself. He joked around. He was happy. He was his usual self."

As usual, FPJ, famous for his boundless generosity, did not want it known that the thousands of food packages that were given by his colleagues in truckloads to the typhoon victims had come from him, according to Tagle.

"He would always help anybody who came to him for help," Tagle said, repeating a very well known fact about the actor. "But he did not want his help to be advertised. He is a very humble person. People always depended on him."

Pa's story, old films

FPJ had plans of coming out with a *teleserye* on the life of his father Fernando Poe Sr., who died when FPJ was 15, leaving the family to struggle for themselves. The older Poe was a movie legend himself.

"We were happy when he told us of his plans," said Tagle. "*Nabuhayan na naman kami ng loob, lalo na't marami sa amin ang walang trabaho ngayon dahil wala nga'ng pelikula* (He renewed our hope, since most of us are jobless because no one is making movies anymore)."

"With his *teleserye*, he could give us jobs, and we'd survive these bad times."

Poe had yet to sell his *teleserye* to the networks, according to Tagle. But at least it was already something to look forward to next year, she added.

"He said he still didn't know on what channel it would run," Tagle said. "He just said he'd direct it himself and then show it on whichever channel would get it."

After FPJ's defeat in the presidential elections last May, the actor went about his usual business, according to Tagle. He was in the process of reactivating his FPJ Productions and went to the office regularly. He even had repairs done in the office, she said.

One of FPJ's projects was the preservation of his old movies, Tagle said. Rolls of film are kept in the FPJ compound, she added.

"One of his assistant directors is reviewing these films," Tagle said. "He would drop by and check on the progress. He was always in the office. Sometimes, Susan (Roces, FPJ' actress wife) went with him. There was even one Saturday when her niece Sheryl Cruz was there because they were going on a family outing."

'We need you'

Recently, FPJ also organized an amateur basketball league for the kids in the Del Monte neighborhood. Tagle said FPJ had supplied even the uniforms of the kids, whom the actor wanted to pull away from the temptation of drugs on the streets. This is why FPJ has always encouraged them to use his basketball court inside the FPJ compound, according to Tagle.

"He would even watch the games," she said.

Tagle has been crying on and off since she learned of FPJ's stroke last Saturday. She rushed to the hospital on Sunday and kept vigil with the other show biz people—big stars and bit players alike—who did not want to leave the hospital without catching a glimpse of the actor.

"I was able to see him at the ICU," Tagle related. "I whispered in his ear to get well. I told him I love him and that small people in the movie industry like me needed him. I have not stopped praying for him. Even the doctors said only prayers can help him now."

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Customs surpasses P112-B collection goal

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Customs surpassed its 2004 collection target of P112 billion as early as November, boosting the national government's chances of posting a lower-than-projected budget deficit this year.

The government set a deficit ceiling of P197.8 billion for this year, but Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the actual figure might be lower than that.

Customs Commissioner George Jereos yesterday said the bureau had collected a little over P113 billion as of end-November. This, he said, prompted the BOC to work on meeting its internal projection of P121 billion for the whole year.

"We are a little ambitious. I am optimistic that we can achieve our internal target, although historically, our collections taper off starting mid-December," said Jereos in a telephone interview.

The BOC's statistics department said that as of Dec. 9, the bureau's collection stood at P115.959 billion, or 8.3 percent higher than its target for the period. The collection as of that day was also P16.11 billion or 16.1 percent more than the BOC's collection in the same period last year.

For the month of November alone, the bureau's collection reached P10.225 billion, or 2.8 percent higher than the target of P9.99 billion for the month. It was also 13 percent higher than the P9.034 billion collected in the same month last year.

The BOC accounts for about 20 percent of the national government's revenue collection, making it the second biggest revenue earner after the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

Jereos attributed the BOC's high revenue collection in the first 11 months of the year to higher importation of oil products and the depreciation of the peso against the dollar. Since Customs duties are paid in dollars, changes in the foreign exchange rate affect the peso value of the agency's collection.

The customs chief also credited ongoing programs of the agency to improve its efficiency for the high 11-month collection figure.

"We really tried our best to improve our collection efficiency and increase our revenue collection. We succeeded in improving our efficiency by 10 percent from last year's level," said Jereos.

The BOC earlier said it had started automating its operations, allowing companies to transact business with the bureau through the Internet. This, he said, encouraged prompt payment of duties.

But while the BOC did not have a hard time achieving its 2004 collection target, Jereos said its collection performance for next year would be challenged by the uncertainty that the revenue-raising measures pending in Congress would be passed this year, and implemented early next year.

For 2005, the BOC is tasked to collect P138 billion, or 23 percent higher than its P112-billion goal for this year. The 2005 target, he said, already accounted the additional revenue to be generated from some of the proposed measures—including the increase of the value-added tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent and the hike in alcohol and cigarette taxes.

Jereos admitted that without the tax measures, the BOC might have a hard time achieving next year's target.

Congress earlier committed to approve at least three revenue-raising measures before the end of the year. But to this date, not a single measure has been passed. Congress is going on a Christmas break next week.

T-bills, T-bonds issuance schedule for Q1 '05

A. T-bills	Tenor	Volume
Jan 5 & 19	91-day	P6 billion
	182-day	P4.5 billion
	364-day	P4.5 billion
Feb 2 & 16	91-day	P4.5 billion
	182-day	P4 billion
	364-day	P3.5 billion
Mar 2, 16 & 30	91-day	P4.5 billion
	182-day	P4 billion
	364-day	P3.5 billion
B.T-bonds	**Tenor**	**Volume**
Jan 13	4-year	P10 billion
Jan 27	5-year	P10 billion
Feb 10	2-year	P8 billion
Feb 24	10-year	P8 billion
Mar 10	3-year	P8 billion
Mar 23	4-year	P8 billion

NOTE: The Bureau of Treasury usually auctions the debt papers two working days prior to the scheduled issue date. $1=P56.3

Reuters

T-bill, T-bond offerings raised

THE BUREAU of Treasury yesterday said it would offer more treasury bills and treasury bonds in the first quarter of 2005.

In a memorandum to government securities dealers, National Treasurer Norma Lasala said that in January, the bureau would increase the volume of T-bills that it was offering during its fortnightly auction to as much as P15 billion, or P4 billion more than the P11 billion worth of T-bills offered in every auction in the fourth quarter of this year.

The volume, she said, would be reduced to P12 billion in February and March.

The Treasury is also raising the amount of treasury bonds that it was planning to sell every other week in January next year to P20 billion, up from P8 billion this month.

It said that the T-bond offering would be reduced to P16 billion in February and March. The bureau presently offers P4 billion worth of T-bonds at weekly auctions.

The T-bill volume to be offered at each auction in January includes P6 billion worth of 91-day bills, P4.5 billion worth of 182-day bills and P4.5 billion worth of 364-day bills.

In February and March, the volumes will be reduced to P4.5 billion worth of 91-day bills, P4 billion worth of 182-day bills and P3.5 billion worth of 364-day bills.

The Treasury will offer P10 billion

T-BILL/ B4

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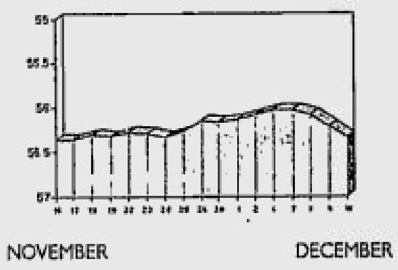

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STOCK MARKET

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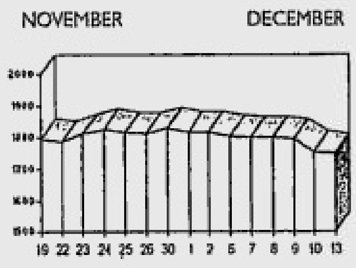


(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks close lower

SHARE prices closed 0.29 percent lower yesterday in listless trading amid an absence of fresh leads to inspire investors, dealers said.

Lingering worries about a possible downgrade of the country's credit rating, high oil prices and an expected hike in US interest rates this week also forced investors to the sidelines, they said.

But bargain-hunting interest in index heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) limited the market's fall and helped ease the selling pressure that extended from last week.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 5.14 points to 1,748.33. It traded between 1,746.98 and 1,759.21.

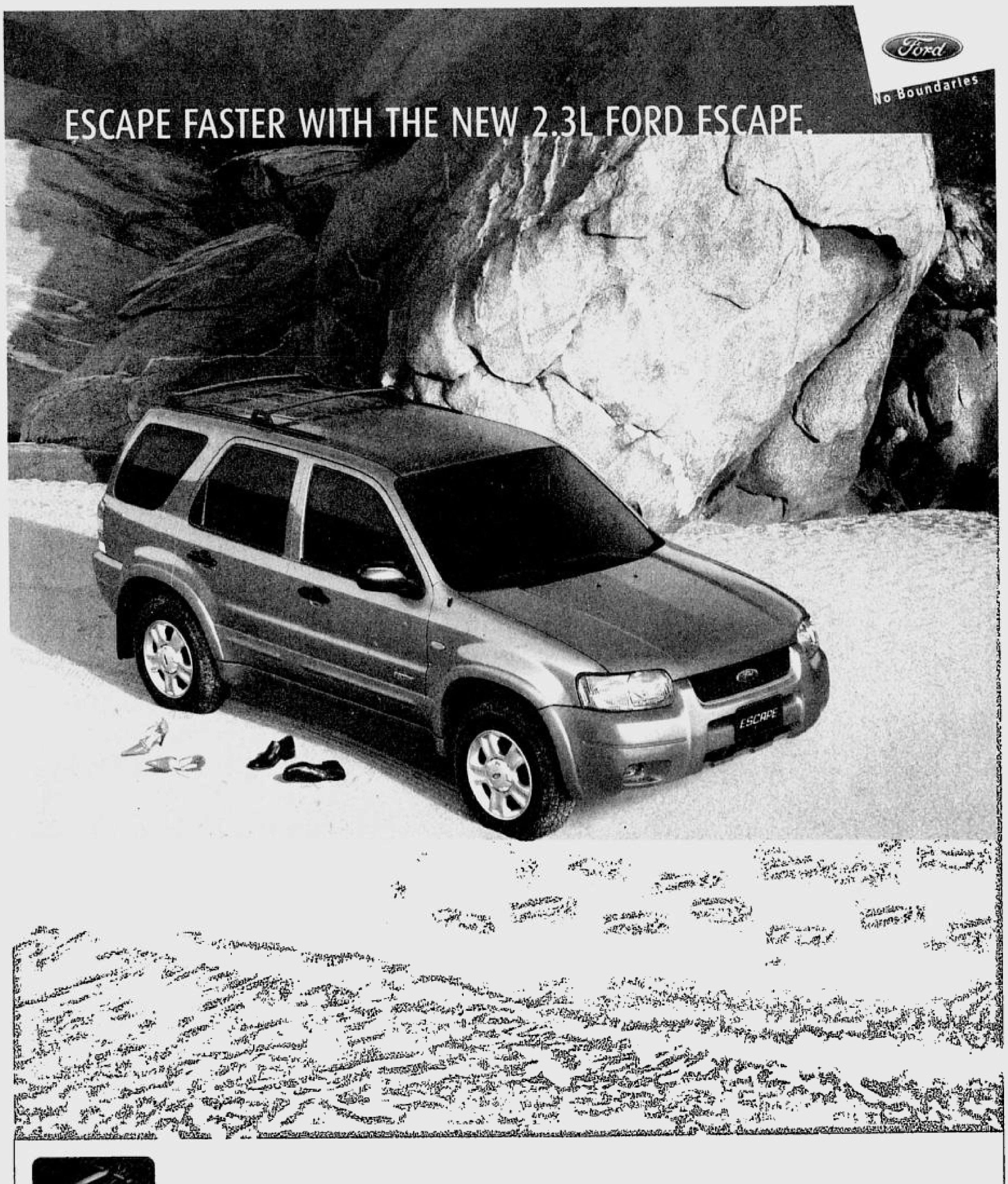
Volume totaled 887.9 million shares worth P747.7 million from 1.94 billion shares worth P1.08 billion on Friday.

The broader all-shares index fell 9.22 points to 1,135.12. Losers led gainers 38 to 17, with 45 stocks unchanged.

"Investors want to see a clear direction for the market before going back in. Right now, there is also no exciting news for them to take aggressive positions," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp.

"Chart-wise, the market's inability to sustain itself above the 1,800-level suggests further weakness towards the 1,700 levels is possible over the near term, before it resumes its upward trek again," said Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

AFP



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REPORTORIAL VIOLATIONS

PSE suspends PT&T trades

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK Exchange has suspended trading of the shares of telecommunications firm Philippine Telegraph and Telephone Corp. for violations of reportorial requirements.

PT&T has not complied with reporting requirements of the PSE such as the submission of its annual report for the fiscal year ended June 30. It has also failed to paid daily fines.

PT&T, however, told the PSE in a letter dated Dec. 10, that it was not able to submit annual report as it was in the middle of sensitive negotiations with its creditors and potential partners.

As of Dec.9, its share price traded at 33 centavos apiece.

It mentioned three main issues that needed to be resolved.

These are debt talks with creditors; ongoing discussions with prospective investors for fresh capital infusion and the manner of settlement of liabilities with government entities.

PT&T's restructuring efforts involve 34 foreign and local lenders, of which 12 have yet to agree to a master restructuring agreement drafted last November 2002.

The company said it has tried to convince its 12 lenders to join the debt restructuring.

Four of the creditors that have not signed, however, have filed cases against PT&T.

PT&T said it was likewise pursuing prospective investors to support the upgrade of its backbone facility.

In the third quarter, PT&T trimmed its losses to P271 million, from P352 million reported in the same period last year.

Tender upper

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IT'S hard to say if the minority stockholders of Union Cement, a publicly listed company, are holding their breath because they have bad breath.

But in all likelihood, they are doing so because they are awaiting word from the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, on the future of their investments in the cement company.

From what I gathered, the SEC, the policeman of the stock market, will meet on Thursday—en banc.

Now, it is possible that the commission will decide on a tender offer claim on more than 40 percent of the stocks in Union Cement. Then again, the SEC may not.

I am only certain that those minority stockholders can no longer stand the suspense. The SEC, as protector of the public, seems to be their only hope.

* * *

AS I previously reported, a large foreign group now controls Union Cement.

The group is called Cemco Holdings, which is affiliated with the Swiss cement giant Holderfin, B.V.

Early this year, Cemco bought the 51 percent controlling interest of Atlas Cement and Bacnotan Consolidated in Union Cement Holdings.

Atlas Cement and Bacnotan Consolidated belong to the Phinma group of companies, which has long been an "institution" in the local cement industry.

Cemco used to own only 9 percent of Union Cement Holdings, but with its acquisition of the shares of the two companies, Cemco naturally gained majority control.

Now here's the clincher: Union Cement Holdings owns 60 percent of the listed Union Cement.

The holding company bought by Cemco from Phinma, as it turned out, had majority control of the cement manufacturer—the listed company itself.

* * *

MOREOVER, before its acquisition of the holding company, Cemco by itself owned only 17 percent of Union Cement.

In other words, together with its control of Union Cement Holdings, Cemco now enjoys majority control of Union Cement.

It now controls 53 percent of the cement company.

As a matter of fact, in a special stockholders meeting only last month, Union Cement already changed its name to Holcim Philippines.

If the name rings a bell, it's probably because "Holcim" is the trademark of one of the world's largest cement groups based in Switzerland, which happens to own Cemco.

* * *

FOLLOWING the transaction between Cemco and Union Cement Holdings, a minority stockholder of the listed firm Union Cement ran to the SEC for help.

That's the National Life Insurance Co. of the Philippines, which contended that, under SEC rules, Cemco should follow the tender offer rule.

It means that Cemco should also offer to buy out the minority stockholders, under the same terms and conditions it gave for its getting majority control.

Whadayano—in a stroke of brilliance, the SEC department handling the case ruled that the transaction of Cemco was not covered, after all, by the "mandatory" tender offer rule.

All right, fine, but do we take it now that "mandatory" is a relative word?

* * *

THAT department simply adopted the argument presented by Cemco, which said that the rule should apply only to "direct" acquisition of shares in the listed company.

Remember that Cemco bought majority control in Union Cement Holdings, which is not a listed company, which in turn controls Union Cement, the listed company.

All right, from now on, if anybody wants to go around the tender offer rule, the buyer and the seller of a listed company only have to simply put up a holding company.

Presto—the rule disappears! Nobody ever knew that anybody could make things disappear in law, just like that. It's even better than magic!

Down here in my barangay, we have a term for it. We call it *NANG-IISA*, which roughly means, "putting one up over the other." What's that—tender upper?

* * *

AND SO National Life Insurance appealed the ruling of the SEC department to the SEC en banc, the collegial body ruling ultimately on cases brought before the commission.

The SEC en banc, as I said, is scheduled to meet this Thursday.

It is therefore a meeting which the other minority stockholders of Union Cement will watch closely.

By the way, those are only the little guys in the stock market, the same guys who can only hope that a big corporation such as National Life Insurance has enough clout to take on the SEC.

After all, the tender offer rule is only strictly practiced in other countries, precisely to protect minority stockholders and nobody else. Meaning, only the public!

* * *

ANY branch of the 324 local branches of PNB, the Philippine National Bank, plus its branches abroad, accepts cash donations for the victims of Violeta, Winnie and Yoyong.

The donation will go to a fund called "Pagkakaisa ng Bayan."

For the sake of our good friend Bong and Lito, the fund name still leads to the acronym PNB. Get it?

Launched by the bank early last week, the fund will be turned over to the National Disaster Coordinating Council and to the calamity victims.

But you must deposit your donation to Account No. 583-501534-5.

As if to lead by example, the employees of PNB decided to cancel their yearly Christmas party. Instead, they donated the party budget to the fund.

As a matter of fact, the PNB already handed over to Gloriaetta a check for P500,000 as the employees' donation to the fund.

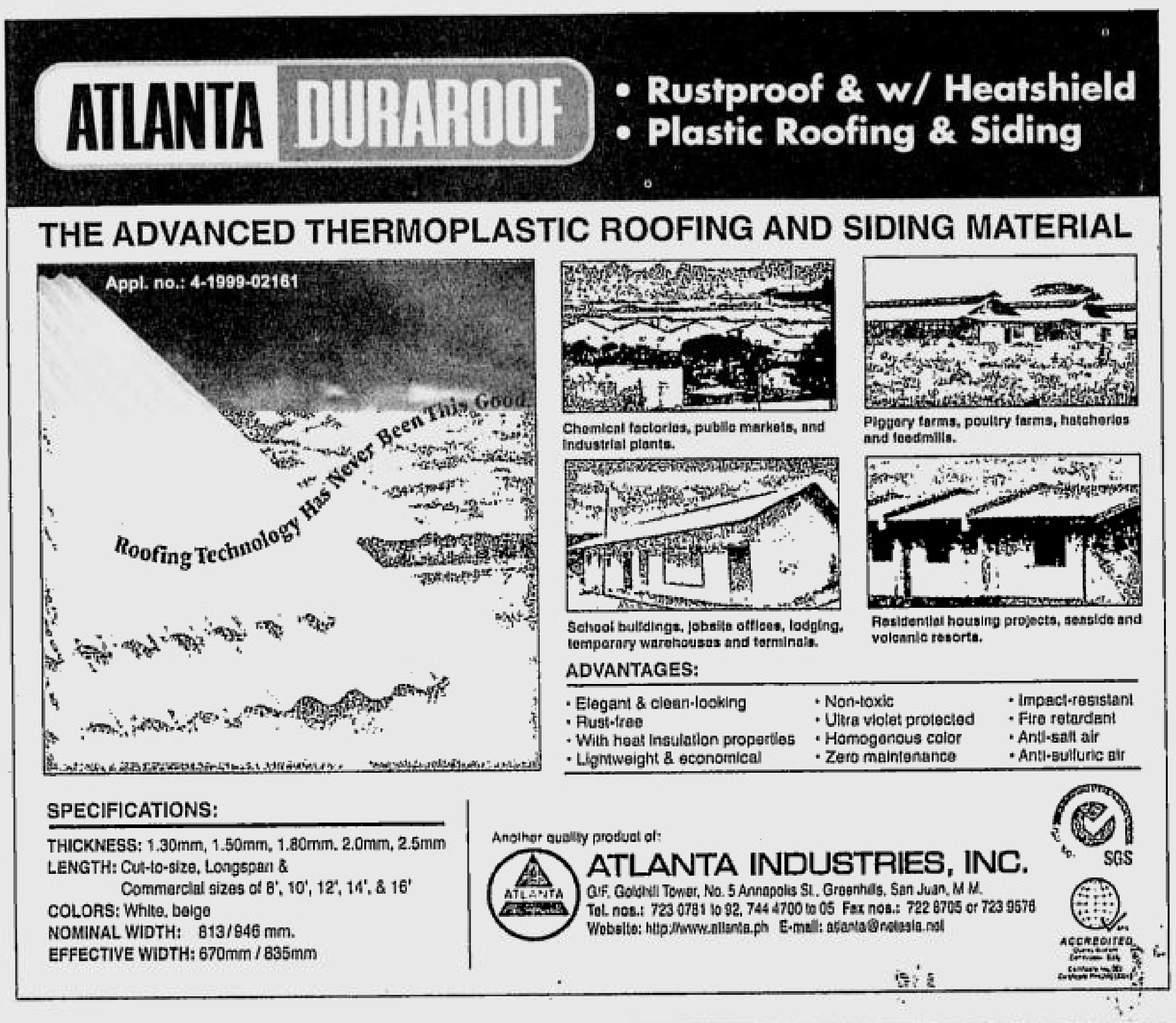
Officers of PNB abroad also passed the hat around during a concert tour in Europe for OFWs to raise funds for the victims.

As you know, PNB is big in the OFW remittance business.

It organized OFW communities abroad through various activities such as basketball tournaments and concerts.

If you remember, it was also PNB which, last May, became the first financial institution ever to raise funds for clean, honest and fai elections.

I know it was able to raise the mone The only thing is, I still don't know if i succeeded in its bid for the clean elec tions.



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Gatchalian back in plastics

By Doris C. Dumlao

PLASTICS "king" William Gatchalian has gone back to the plastics business through publicly listed Metro Alliance Holdings and Equities Corp. (Mahec), but as a "mid-stream" player or supplier of raw materials this time around.

Gatchalian's Mahec, which recently took over the $350-million Bataan Polyethylene Corp. from BP of UK, Petronas of Malaysia and Sumitomo of Japan, signed last week a six-year supply deal with Iran Petrochemical Commercial Co.

The supply agreement with IPPC, a state-owned company under Iran's Ministry of Petroleum, will be good for six years and shipments of ethylene or C2 to Mahec's Bataan Polyethylene plant will start in 2005.

Bataan Polyethylene will use C2 as feedstock in the manufacture of plastic resins in its polyethylene plant located at the Petrochemical Complex in Mariveles, Bataan.

The polyethylene plant in Bataan has a rated production capacity of 275,000 metric tons, which is expandable to 400,000 metric tons, the biggest in the country.

A well-placed industry source told the INQUIRER that the Gatchalian family, which scaled down its plastics manufacturing business a few years ago, was now going into the "midstream" level.

This means that from manufacturing of plastic products, the family will instead focus on supplying other domestic plastic manufacturers with the raw materials.

The source said that only the Gokongwei group was in the same polyethylene business, but its facility has a smaller capacity.

The Gatchalians took over Mahec six years ago, but it was the first time that it would venture into the mid-stream plastics business.

Since 1998, the Gatchalian family has ventured into leisure-oriented businesses through Waterfront Philippines Inc., which operates the Waterfront Mactan Casino Hotel, Waterfront Cebu City Hotel; Davao Insular Hotel and newly acquired Manila Pavilion.

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The market takes a tumble

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

LAST week was one, which really tested investors' capacity for absorbing bad news and it culminated in a 40-point sell down on Friday. At the beginning of the week, Moody's stated loud and clear that if the Senate did not pass some revenue-raising bills before the end of the year, they would downgrade us by 1 or even 2 notches. This meant that our bonds, already rated as junk, would be lowered to garbage or even trash.

According to Ron Moody, my close friend, it was only my plea for extra time that saved the day. Tearfully, he downgraded the outlook from stable to negative but left the bonds alone. The market breathed a sigh of relief but not for long. The next day, FITCH repeated the threat almost word for word, and unfortunately I have no influence there, so the market resumed its downtrend.

Then on the following day, the World Bank wrote a warning, which took up five pages on BLOOMBERG. It stated in great detail what was wrong with the country and what will happen if our rating fell two notches. It concluded with a cryptic "buenas noches." I think that was a clue but it is not in the Da Vinci code.

To make matters worse, the telecom companies were threatened with a franchise tax and PLDT announced a P2-billion foreign exchange loss due to a changeover to international accounting standards. This was not expected to affect the bottomline for 2004, but investors threw up their hands in despair and the shares fell P55. Then, a government spokesperson, Grace Tan, said the cigarette tax would be increased from P10 billion to P15 billion and this was the straw that broke Camel's back.

I was under the impression that Lucio Tan, Danding Cojuangco, and Manny Pangilinan ran the country, but the President put her foot down and demanded some amendments, a little bit of this and a little bit of VAT. The passing of the amnesty tax and that lateral attrition tax meant that she was not lying down on the job.

The franchise tax is dead in the water so she will have to extend VAT to cover everything. The 2-percent increase in excise duty on petrol will only bring in a modest amount and she should have exercised her right to add P2 a liter. After all, crude oil has fallen from a high of $54 a barrel to just over $40, so over the next month or so, we should see pump prices fall by as much as P6 a liter. Of course, it will not happen but it should fall by at least P3 so she could have inserted the P2 during the decline. You can see that I take a crude interest in oil.

The degree of risk is now so low that a technical rally should be imminent but there is a rumor that the Senate will only pass the cigarette and liquor tax before recessing to eat their Christmas pork. However, we should see window dressing in the last week of the year. The shares most likely to gain are AC, ALI, SMPH, FPH, MERB and TEL in that order. Anyone who does not have the risk factor at his or her fingertips daily cannot be regarded as a serious investor.

Gold shares have been disappointing and the only one to be bought by REGIS in sizable amounts is PXB, which had a big run up but then fell back on local profit taking. LCB and MAB were not bought, and therefore, drifted a little lower. The dollar, which had fallen to a record low against the Euro, suddenly had a strong technical rally and the price of gold dropped $15 an ounce in a single day.

The rally is not expected to last as the US is running a budget deficit, a trade deficit of over $50 billion a month, plus all the money being spent on the war in Iraq. Eventually, the dollar will resume its decline, gold will recover, and the sector will return to favor. Gold shares will really shoot up when a foreign company invests a large sum of money into one of these companies and there are rumors that talks are already underway. The Supreme Court's new ruling will eventually prove highly beneficial to the country as we are said to possess at least $800 billion worth of gold, plus silver and copper.

AC is making a reverse split of 1 for 50. This is rather unusual as it is normally carried out by mining or oil stocks with a par value of 1-centavo being converted into one peso. In the case of AC and ALI, foreign brokers do virtually all the buying and selling with very little done by local brokers. A price of P6.30 looks like a middleweight in the Phisix but at 11.5 cents; it is a flyweight in dollars. So multiplying the price by 50 $5.75 makes it look more respectable to overseas investors.

If you are a stockholder with 1,000 shares, it will be reduced to 20 NEW shares but the price will increase to P315, so its value will remain the same. Expect ALI to follow suit and I would not be in the least surprised if SMPH joins in as well. At present, the minimum lot of all three is 1,000, but in the case of the new AC shares, this will be reduced to 10. Of the others in the Ayala Group, Globe is already a heavyweight, though it looks as if it has been on a diet recently, BPI is barely large enough at almost $1.

By next week, we will know whether the Senate has carried out its promise to pass three or four bills and the market will react accordingly. Everybody knows that a downgrading will result in higher borrowing costs and a weaker peso, so I am hoping that the two parties can put aside their differences and prevent this from happening. If they don't then I belong to the 84 percent who believes they should forgo their pork. They have the power. They must use it or lose it.

Is there an intelligent travel agent among my readers? I want to book an eight-day holiday to Thailand over Christmas, as it is the only time that I do not have to write my daily newsletter. I have a seasonal quotation, which is acceptable, but they want to charge me the full rate for a child who is sharing a bed and not eating in the hotel. Usually, she is free because you pay for the room but I have no objection to paying a nominal amount. Anyone, who can help, please e-mail me as soon as possible as I am running out of time and patience. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Water firms to foot part of ₱500-M Angat rehab

By Christine A. Gaylican

PRIVATE concessionaires Manila Water Company Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. will finance 60 percent of the estimated P500-million rehabilitation of the vital tunnel bringing water to Angat Dam, according to Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Administrator Orlando Hondrade.

The 13-km Umiray-Angat tunnel recently was damaged after a series of typhoons hit the country.

The two water firms draw their supply mainly from the Angat Dam. Maynilad and Manila Water supply water to 12 million customers in Metro Manila and parts of Cavite.

Antonino T. Aquino, Manila Water president, told the INQUIRER that the 60 percent repair cost would be equally divided between the two private concessions. The MWSS would shoulder the remaining 40 percent.

According to Aquino, the shared resources of the three agencies will ease the burden of government.

Hondrade said that the P500-million figure was just an initial estimate. The two companies and their consultants would also help in the assessment of the full extent of the damage to the Umiray-Angat water tunnel.

"They will render financial and technical assistance," Hondrade said in another interview.

To clear the logs and mud now clogging the Umiray-Angat water tunnel in Bulacan, hauling equipment would have to be brought in by helicopters imported from Malaysia as road networks remain inaccessible.

"The water tunnel had to be cleared from the outside and the only means now is by air," Hondrade said.

As for the water supply situation, the foreseen 10 to 15 percent reduction in the water supply for both concession areas would only have a slight impact.

"The foreseen reduction of about 10 percent is still manageable and we could still supply our customers. There might be slight interruptions to the usual 24-hour and 12-hour water supply delivery but this would only be temporary," noted Manila Water's president Aquino.

Located in Norzagaray, Bulacan, the dam also supplies the potable and irrigation water in Bulacan and adjoining provinces.

But according to a national mandate, household consumption is a priority. Water for irrigation is usually cut off.

According to Ramon B. Alikpala, National Water Resources Board executive director, water officials have yet to decide how much irrigation water would be diverted for the use of household consumers.

Bank chair cleared of estafa charges

TWO OFFICIALS of Urban Bank Inc. have been cleared of estafa charges after the Supreme Court approved the motion of the Solicitor General to withdraw the cases against them last Nov. 30.

Cleared were Arsenio M. Bartolome III, board chair, and Corazon M. Bejasa, secretary of UBI.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. filed the charges against Bartolome and Bejasa, in connection with the reported closure of Urban Bank on April 26, 2000.

Judge Zeus C. Abrogar of the Makati Regional Trial Court originally dismissed the cases against the two after finding them not guilty of the charges. But the Office of the Solicitor General appealed the lower court's decision with the Court of Appeals, alleging that there was "abuse of discretion."

But the CA found that the "findings and conclusions" of Judge Abrogar were "based on evidence and information submitted to the court and did not constitute an abuse of discretion on his part."

Again, the Department of Justice, through the OSG, elevated the case to the Supreme Court. On June 28, the OSG filed with the high court a motion to withdraw its appeal. The Supreme Court approved the petition, terminating the cases filed against Bartolome and Bejasa.

In 2001, Urban Bank merged with the Export Industry Bank. All assets and liabilities of UBI and of its investment house affiliate have been absorbed by EIB. All Urban Bank and ULL depositors and creditors have also been fully paid.

Pre-need sales up 25% to ₱3.34B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED firms sold a total of P3.34 billion worth of plans in October, 25 percent higher than the P2.68 billion the firms sold in the same period last year.

In a monthly sales report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the number of plans sold grew 18.25 percent to 49,817 in October from 42,130 during the same month last year.

Life plans accounted for the biggest increase in terms of number of plans sold, surging 173 percent year-on-year in October to 20,517 from 7,507.

In peso terms, life plans expanded 239 percent to P677.04 million in October from P199.26 million last year.

Education plans grew 23 percent to P1.1 billion from P893 million while pension plans slipped 1.2 percent in October to P1.56 billion from P1.58 billion in the same month last year.

From January to October, gross sales grew 21.12 percent to P32.08 billion from P26.49 billion. The number of plans rose a mere 0.18 percent to 433,498 from 432,708.

For the ten-month period, education plans rose 12.2 percent to P11.49 billion from P10.23 billion last year despite a decrease in the number of plans sold due to an increase in prices.

Among the biggest education plan sellers for the ten-month period were Philam Plans Inc. with P3.3 billion and Prudentialife Plans with P2 billion.

LandBank sets aside ₱1B for Davao City

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-owned Land Bank of the Philippines has earmarked close to P1 billion in fresh lending to Davao City, in line with its thrust to help viable local government units struggling with the fragile fiscal position.

In a recent press briefing, Landbank president Gary Teves said the bank had finalized a P970-million 10-year loan facility for Davao, which would be disbursed over the next two years.

Of the total amount, P320 million would be allotted for the construction of farm-to-market roads while P150 million would finance drainage systems.

The remaining P100 million should cover urban development and land reform.

The loan aims to help Davao officials in relocating squatters or informal settlers, enhance the city's drainage system and complete other urban development projects.

The bank is trying to get Japan's Bank for International Cooperation to help with the project for Davao.

The credit line for the city is part of an overall development package for Davao which requires approval from the National Economic and Development Authority.

Cebu takes up Landbank's biggest portfolio among LGUs. The government unit has an outstanding loan of P4 billion.

Teves said that LGUs had a credit line with Landbank that remained largely unutilized. He estimated the amount would be about P8 to P12 billion.

The bank is encouraging all LGUs with resources to make use of the facility.

In the case of Davao, the lending shall be partly backed by the city's assignment of its internal revenue allotment.

Landbank's total outstanding loans to LGUs reached P19.5 billion as of end-October, up by 19 percent from the level in the same period last year.

"In view of the national government's belt-tightening measures, LGUs need to play a greater role in pump-priming local economies through development projects," Teves said. "Landbank remains the major source of financing for LGU projects because we recognize their vital role in countryside development."

The loan assistance benefited 42 provinces, 51 cities and 408 municipalities nationwide.

LGUs in the Visayas received the largest share with P6.5 billion, followed by LGUs in North and Central Luzon with P3.5 billion.

LGUs in the National Capital Region received P3.3 billion, while Mindanao and Southern Luzon-based LGUs received P3.1 billion each.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 13, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	24.25	24.5	24	24.5	1,172,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50.5	51	50.5	51	1,564,800
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	48	48	8,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	1,610,000
International Exch. Bank	16.75	17	16.75	17	479,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27.5	27.5	26.5	27	56,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	28	28	27.5	28	160,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	3,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2500	2500	2495	2495	100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1785	1785	1785	1785	480
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	14,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.78	1.64	1.66	29,385,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	920	920	880	885	60,630
Ipeople Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	114,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.033	0.034	0.032	0.033	2,400,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	50,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.44	2.48	2.42	2.44	540,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1220	1245	1220	1235	154,870
Ivantage Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.7	1,610,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	9,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16	16	16	66,800
Manila Electric Co. B	26	26	25	25	1,743,000
Petron Corp.	3.05	3.05	3	3.05	1,790,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	130,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	20,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.16	352,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.94	1.94	450,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	145,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29	29	29	29	130,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	9,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	62,500
San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	75.5	75.5	75.5	218,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	23,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.4	9,444,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3,067,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12	12	12	9,500
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	74,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.7	9,900,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.75	3.75	4,720,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	100,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.65	4.7	1,132,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30.5	30.5	30	30	133,100
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.85	2.95	748,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.56	1.56	220,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	259,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.39	0.4	0.37	0.37	25,330,000
Polar Property Holdings	2	2	2	2	20,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	11,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	40,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	720,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	57,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	200,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.95	1	0.93	0.93	2,560,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	560,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.5	305,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,100
OTHERS					
CENTRO ESCOLAR UNIVERSITY	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.7	35,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.6	9,337,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.24	0.24	11,330,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.135	0.135	7,580,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	3,370,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	3,140,000
SM Development Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.22	1.22	197,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	4,531,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	90,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	50,300,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.75	3.75	3.5	3.5	276,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	15,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	360,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	8,160,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	98,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	236,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.0048	0.0046	0.0048	193,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.54	1,810,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.63	0.63	0.61	0.61	1,410,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.18	350,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	29,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.036	0.036	4,200,000

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Telegraph and Telephone Corp. requested and was granted voluntary trading suspension, effective Dec. 13 until it has complied with its requirements with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

* * *

EVER Gotesco Resources and Holdings Inc. disclosed the shareholdings of the following newly elected directors: Jose Go (258,022,601), Joel Go (100,000), Evelyn Go (2,371,315), Lourdes Ortiga (81), Cristina Aragon (9,401), Dionicio Yao (10) and Sy Chun Sui (10).

* * *

VICTORIAS Milling Co. Inc. elected Hubert Tubio as director, replacing Aristotle Villaraza, who resigned.

* * *

DMCI Holdings Inc. confirmed signing a memorandum with the town of Concepcion, Iloilo for exclusive mutual cooperation for a coal-fired power plant project.

* * *

ASIAN Terminals Inc. elected Nicholas Antony West as director, replacing Richard Setchell, who resigned.

* * *

MATSUSHITA Electric Philippines Corp. is now Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corp., following SEC approval of the change in name.

Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

December 13, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.756029334	1.000000	56.3350
Japan	Yen	0.007191	0.009511	0.5358
United Kingdom	Pound	1.448174	1.915500	107.9097
Hongkong	Dollar	0.097246	0.128627	7.2462
Switzerland	Franc	0.651525	0.861772	48.5479
Canada	Dollar	0.617217	0.816393	45.9915
Singapore	Dollar	0.457175	0.604705	34.0661
Australia	Dollar	0.566399	0.749176	42.2048
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.005383	2.652520	149.4297
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201608	0.266667	15.0227
Brunei	Dollar	0.455796	0.602882	33.9634
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019048	0.025195	1.4194
UAE	Dirham	0.205874	0.272309	15.3405
Euro	Euro	1	1.322700	74.5143
Argentina	Peso	0.254555	0.336700	18.9680
Brazil	REAL	0.272738	0.360750	20.3229
Denmark	Kroner	0.134589	0.178021	10.0288
India	Rupee	0.016982	0.022462	1.2654
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.198982	0.263193	14.8270
Mexico	New Peso	0.066667	0.088180	4.9676
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531255	0.702691	39.5861
South Africa	Rand	0.130609	0.172756	9.7322
Korea	Won	0.000708	0.000937	0.0528
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023295	0.030812	1.7358

T-bill, T-bond . . .

From page B1

worth of T-bonds at each fortnightly auction in January, and P8 billion worth of bonds at each auction in February and March.

The Philippines is Asia's largest sovereign debt issuer after Japan.

The Treasury had offered to sell up to P16 billion worth of treasury bonds each month last October and November.

The Philippines issues treasury bills and treasury bonds, which have a maturity of two to 25 years, to help fund its budget deficit.

With a report from Reuters

TLC the travel and leisure card offers free travel

TRAVEL and Leisure for the common Filipino, in light of the country's economic crisis and growing discrepancy between the Philippine peso and the US dollar, has become an unreachable commodity. Unless you define 'travel' as being in another country to enter its labor force, a greater majority of Filipinos are not actively involved in the US$4 trillion global industry of travel.

A new concept which merges one of the most powerful international travel discount cards with a unique business opportunity that comes with free travel or the opportunity to see the world absolutely free is about to pave the way for the new Filipino traveler. TLC Global Traveler Inc has recently released one of the most powerful and benefit packed business in the country today. Known as The Ultimate Travel and Leisure Card or TLC, its unique selling proposition is that it offers the most powerful international travel discount card which gives the card holder 50 percent off on over 5,500 hotels and resorts in six continents all over the world through its partner ITC-50, based in Chicago, Ill., and up to 30 percent discount on over 10,000 local establishments and hotels all over the Philippines. Apart from these huge international and local discounts, TLC cardholders also enjoy peace-of-mind by being protected by two of the leading 24/7 emergency medical and roadside assistance of Lifeline Arrows and Wheeler's Club Inc. And if these benefits aren't enough, each TLC cardholder is also enjoys the ATM and Debit facility of the Philippine National Bank (PNB).

"These, by far, are the current benefits being enjoyed by every TLC Cardholder. Many more privileges are in the offing by next year 2005," according to TLC GTI managing director Henry Reyes, "The biggest advantage to being a TLC card holder is the unique business opportunity which comes packaged with it. It's the only business opportunity in the Philippines today which allows you to earn Free Travel points to hundreds of destinations all over the world. For as little as 32 points you can be on your way to Hongkong, for freel or 86 points gets you free ticket to Sydney!" Reyes also adds, "You can't go wrong with your TLC business. Global travel is US$4 trillion industry and Direct Selling is US$29 billion Philippine Industry. This, together with TLC's powerful all in one card benefits, means that the only one who can define when and where you can travel for free is you!"

With its thousands of features and benefits, it not surprising that TLC is now the preferred travel companion of thousands of Filipinos including local celebrities. A quick look in to their audio video presentation shows TLC Cardholders, TJ Manotoc, Brad Turvey, LJ Moreno, Rachel Lobangco, and Daisy Reyes among the many celebrity shopping and travel bugs who flash their TLC cards. For more information about the ultimate travel card, or log on to www.1000in1card.com

CYA IS GE DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR
GE Consumer and Industrial president-CEO Lloyd Trotter (2nd from left) presents the Distributor of the Year Award to CYA founder and patriarch Chan Yec An (3rd from left)and his general manager Franklin Chan (3rd from right). Joining them also from GE are C&I president-CEO for America Jim Campbell (2nd from right), GE C&I president-CEO for Asia Dan Smytka (1st from left) and C&I Asia - appliances general manager Jeho Ryu. The award recognizes the performance of CYA for 2004 in terms of outstanding marketing efforts, sales growth and sales amount.

Zuellig Foundation sets up center for relief operations

THE ZUELLIG Foundation has set up an emergency operations center for the Corporate Network for Disaster Response (CNDR) to assist in sending donations to the families affected by the recent typhoons Unding, Violeta, Winnie and Yoyong.

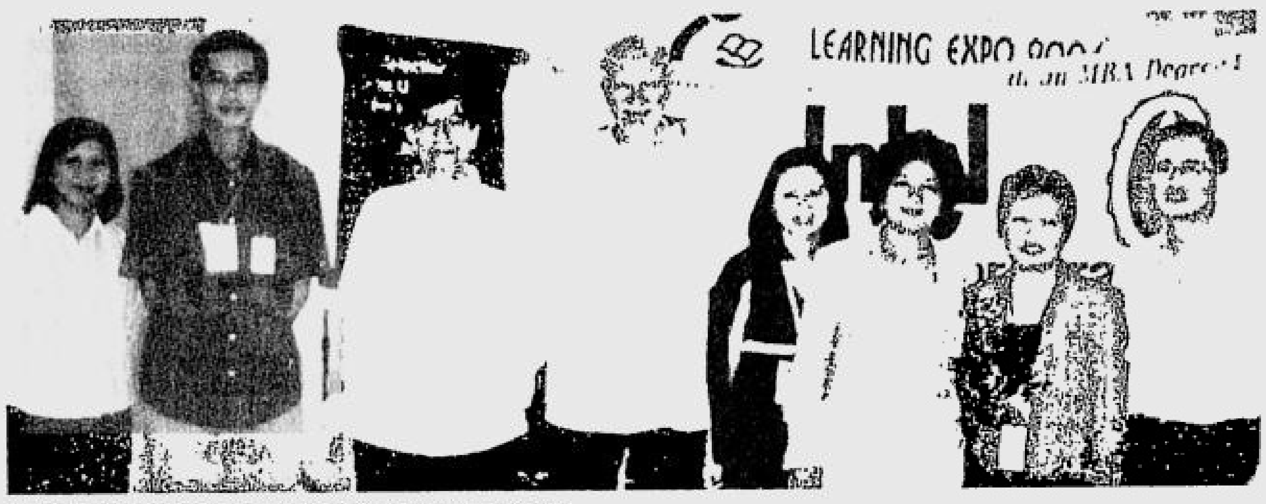
Among the activities in the center are: (1) coordination of responses and matching it with the needs of affected families in evacuation centers; (2) actual delivery of assistance, coursed through several channels: CNDR members, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), national and regional disaster coordinating councils, partner NGO's and church organizations. As of today, CNDR has mobilized at least P 10M worth of emergency assistance for thirty to thirty-five thousand families.

Zuellig Pharma Corp donated medicines as well as relief kits for evacuation centers in Cauayan and Dagupan containing beddings, blankets, mosquito nets and clothes. The Zuellig Foundation is coordinating emergency health teams from various hospitals to be deployed to affected areas as soon as situation has stabilized. GlaxoSmithKline is also donating medicines. ABS CBN, Coca Cola Foundation, Microsoft Phils, Petron Foundation have provided relief goods to approximately 6,490 families in Roxas, Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Dingalan, Aurora, Bicol, Calapan, Quezon, and. Camarines Sur.

An energy sector-wide response for food assistance worth P8 million was generated from Petron, Pilipinas Shell, UNOCAL/Philippine Geothermal, PNOC, Meralco/Quezon Power, Transco, Mirant, CAL Energy, PMR, CBK Power Co, and First Gas. The Zuellig Foundation, Andres Soriano, American Chamber, and Makati Business Club are doing resource mobilization for CNDR, while ABS CBN is continuously conducting telethon for donations and Philippine Business for Social Progress will conduct fund drive for CNDR emergency operations.

IBM Phils is supporting NDCC operations center and repacking areas in Camp Aguinaldo. Petron, Pilipinas Shell and Sea Oil have offered the use of all their service stations as drop-off point for any goods and medicine donations for CNDR. Hands on Manila is mobilizing their volunteers to support CNDR EOC and NDCC operations.

For those who are interested to send donations in cash or in kind, please contact: 893-1449, 892-2871 and 815-9678.



INTEL MANAGERS TO GET ATENEO MBA
Intel Corp, the world's leading microprocessor manufacturer has signed an agreement with the Ateneo Graduate School of Business (AGSB) allowing their employees and managers to avail of an Ateneo MBA. AGSB offers standard MBA programs as well as the MBA for Middle Managers and the prestigious Ateneo-Regis MBA Executive Degree Program. Photo shows (AGSB) assistant dean and executive director of the Regis Program Albert Buenviaje (3rd from left) with Intel Phils GM Peter Iredale during the contract signing. With them are (from left): Intel and AGSB officers Bigette Vinuya, Ric Palo, Elizabeth Arriola, Haidee Poquiz, Enah Alacantara-Isidro and Jun Bulos.

UCC COFFEE SOON TO BREW AT WESTGATE CENTER
Coffee lovers will soon enjoy a different coffee experience with the opening of UCC Coffee this first quarter of 2005 at the Westgate Center, Alabang. UCC Coffee, a total coffee company, also offers a delectable all-day dining fare and a menu of unique Japanese fusion dishes as well. Seen in the photo (from left) are UCC Coffee Phils ownar Hubert Young, Westgate Center project head Anton Hechanova, Westgate Center marketing manager Lani de Leon and Westgate Center senior leasing official Mike Hilario.

SM mixes food with music

THERE are a number of delicious reasons why mall goers frequent the SM Supermalls. Just when you thought the place was only for savoring thousands of appetizing food and refreshing drinks, now you can relax and unwind as you listen to live band performances of today's hot artists at the SM Food Music Zone. The Food Music Zone or FMZ carries a hip and vibrant personality that will surely attract today's outgoing generation of mall goers. SM City Manila is the first of the SM Supermalls to showcase what FMZ has to offer. FMZ is a prime gimmick place where the young and even the young-at-heart can unwind and catch up on each other's stories, choose their meal from a variety of food stalls as they listen to the wonderful selections of the performing artists. Situated near the mall entrance, visitors from nearby schools and offices can easily go and have their lunch or dinner. FMZ offers a wide range of delectable meals and cool drinks courtesy of Bodhi Vegetarian Health Food, Inihaw Express, Kamay-Kainan, Beer Station, Kusina ni Gracia, Chicken Company, Magic Wok and Sizzling Plate with Dencio's and Marina opening soon. What's more, PC gamers and Internet users will soon flock to FMZ when Compass Internet opens its new branch within the entertainment area. The Food Music Zone at lower ground floor east wing SM City Manila, which opens at 9 a.m. up to 9 p.m., is just the first of many FMZs that will soon transform the dining experience of our regular patrons as well as complement nicely with their shopping experience.

AGRILINK AWARDS 2GO LOGISTICS CEO
The foundation for Resource Linkage and Development Inc (FLRD), organizers of Agrilink/Foodlink 2004 recently awarded 2GO Logistics president and CEO Klaus Schroeder (2nd from left), with a plaque of appreciation for being the over-all chair of the said event. Antonio Roces, president of the FLRD (2nd from right) shook hands with Schroeder, as he also congratulated the latter for a successful brand launch of the Aboitiz freight group, 2GO - the newest Aboitiz brand that handles freight, express, solutions and logistics.

Product FILES

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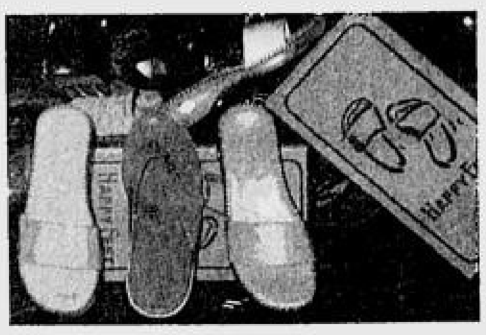
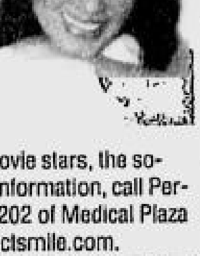


THE HAPPY Feet Contour Comfort Sandals were conceptualized to cater to clientele who prefer lighter sandals, but still with the trademark comfort Happy Feet is known for. Using lightweight polyurethane soles, real leather upper, and a well padded sock liner backed by arch and heel supports, these sandals give comfort to the vital areas of your feet. Happy Feet Contour Comfort Sandals, like the ever popular Happy Feet wooden orthopedic sandals, will fast become symbols of Classic - Casual - Comfort wear, the three (3) C's which Happy Feet try to incorporate into every sandal they make. It is available in regular Happy Feet outlets such as SM Department Stores, Cinderella, Health Express, Landmark and Jonels. A perfect gift of health and comfort this Yuletide Season.

Whitest teeth only at Perfect Smile



STILL wondering how your favorite celebrities get those almost sparkling white teeth or why models in poster ads, billboards and TV commercial can easily smile and flash those oh-so perfect white teeth? Like Kristine Hermosa, you can now get the whitest teeth you have always dreamed of. Thanks to Perfect Smile Teeth Whitening Salon, the first and original teeth whitening salon which first opened in Glorietta 2 last year, has now moved at the Medical Plaza Makati. This is to provide excellent, fast and convenient services to its distinct breed of clients which consists mostly of celebrities, movie stars, the socialite circle and known media personalities. For more information, call Perfect Smile Dental Salon at 892-9058 or drop by Suite 1202 of Medical Plaza Makati, Amorsolo St. Makati or email at info@oneperfectsmile.com.

The Wonderful X-mas Show

THE MOST wonderful Christmas show is set to send shopping troops again to SM Megamall, for the biggest shopping event of the year — The 2nd Wonderful Christmas Gift and Food Show and The 2nd Great Christmas Toy Show set for Dec. 16 to 19, at the Megatrade Hall 2, 5th Level, Bldg. B of SM Megamall. Shop for unique gift items, personal accessories, leather goods, fashion articles, garments, delectable food treats, and the best toys in the planet from over 150 booths. Organized by Neotrade Enterprises, it's a one stop shop for exciting presents, toys and Christmas food treats , plus exciting activities for the entire family. Aside from fantastic things to shop for, there will be fun activities for the entire family. For the Toy savvy, popular celebrities will feature for the 2nd straight year, their favorite toys in the show's Celebrity Toy Museum. Among the celebrities who will showcase their prized toys are Ogie Alcasid, Michael V., Ding Dong Dantes, Melissa Gibbs, and many others.

Erratum

In the article "Hope Empowers Visayas", which appeared in the "PBSP at 34" Supplement in the Dec. 9, 2004 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Juan Miguel del Gallejo was erroneously identified as the chair of the PBSP Visayas Regional Committee. Del Gallejo is actually the former chair. The current chair is John F. Domingo. Our deepest apologies to Juan Miguel del Gallejo and John F. Domingo.

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NOTICE

Ito ay isang patalastas upang ipaalam sa lahat na mayroong LABAS SA HUKUMAN KASUNDUAN NG MGA TAGAPAGMANA ni LUCIA DILLERA at PAGBAUBAYA na ninotaryo ni Atty. Zenaida O Balmas noong Nov. 18, 2004 as per Doc. No. 402, Page No. 81; Book No. 4; Series of 2004 in Quezon City. PAGPAPAUBAYA sa buong karapatan sa MARCO POLO LAND PROPERTIES, INC., na may pahatirang sulat at kalakalan sa 69-A Maginoo St., Diliman, Quezon City sa katauhan ni IMELDA D. SAN PEDRO at TEODORO L. LIM ay magkatuwang nagpapaganap ng kanilang KASUNDUAN (MOA) na ninotaryo ni Atty. Balmas noong Nov. ,18, 2004 as per Doc. No. 403; Page No. 81; Book No. 4; Series of 2004 in Quezon City upang maisaayos ang lahat

(PDI- Dec. 7, 14 & 21, 2004)

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— 2 Corinthians 5:8

In Loving Memory
of our Dearly Beloved

EVA TORRALBA OBSEQUIO

of Jolo, Sulu and Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

Peacefully joined the Lord on December 12, 2004 at the age of 83.

She will be most missed by her brothers and sister **Orlando (†), Ludovico, Sr. (†), Patria, Benjamin, Jaime** and **Manuel**; her in-laws, **Racquel (†), Conching, Otilia, Samson Sr., Milagros** and **Faricia**; her nephews, nieces, grandnephews, grandnieces, great grandnephew and great grandnieces.

Her body lies in state at Rolling Hills Memorial Chapel, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental.

Interment will be on Thursday, December 16, 2004 after the 2:00 PM service.

MARIANO "NANO" ABLAZA LIMJAP

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 12, 2004 at the age of 75.

His beloved wife **SOPHIE TRINIDAD**; children **LITA & VINCE HENSON, BOBOY & GERTY, MIKE & CYNTHIA, AYEE & LIEL PASCUAL, BISO & NICKY VILLASEÑOR, MINA & TOTI REFORMADO, MANNY & RUBY**; grandchildren **Melissa, Paolo, Vanessa & Hank, Juno, Marlon, Marco, Roberta, Carla, Martin, Denise, Patricia, Nicolo, Carissa, Carmela** and **Benjam**; brothers **Jake** and **Toti**; sister **Monina Alvarez**, request you to join in celebrating **NANO'S** coming home to the Lord.

His remains lie in state at the **Capilla de la Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.**

Funeral Mass will be on Thursday, December 16,2004 at 1:00 P.M. at the Capilla dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes. Cremation shall follow at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, at 3:00 P.M.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Parish Development Foundation will be appreciated.

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En memoria de:

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Entrego su alma al Señor despues de recibir sus Santos Olios en Burlingame, California

Hijo del defunto **Sr. Miguel M. Picornell** y la defunta **Sra. Maria C. Barranquero de Picornell.**

Su deconsolada familia- hermanas **Magda B. Picornell de Anson y Rosemarie B. Picornell de Shidner**; cuñados **Jose Anson y Rodney Shidner**; sobrinos y sobrinas.

El entierro sera el Lunes, **13 de Diciembre 2004** en el **Skylawn Memorial Park en Half-Moon Bay, California** despues de la Misa Requiem que se celebrara en la **Iglesia de St. Matthew en San Mateo, California.**

Rogad a Dios por su alma.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life."

— John 3:16

CLASSIFIEDS

UST Publishing House took launch

THE UST Publishing House will hold Part 2 of the book launching on Dec. 11, at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex Auditorium at 10 a.m. Part 1 was held last Aug. 10 wherein 24 titles of books were launched. This time 16 new books will be launched to attain its goal of producing 40 titles every year. Rev. Fr. Rolando V. dela Rosa, O.P., chair of the Commission on Higher Education is guest of honor. Rev. Fr. Tamerlane R. Lana, O.P., Rector of the University will present the first copies of the books to the authors. He will be assisted by Dr. Mechelline Zonia I. Manalastas, Director of the UST Publishing House.

Get Up Close and Personal features Rep. Mikey Arroyo

THE one-on-one interview by Marissa Del Mar with Rep. Arroyo will discuss candidly various issues and his expectations from his fellow neophyte lawmakers on proposed measures and enactments that they intend to pass. Up Close and Personal will feature the most-talked-about Presidential Son, with his very intriguing life-story Congressman Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, in its episode on Dec.14, at IBC 13, 11 p.m. "Up Close and Personal..."has and will continue to feature other lawmakers and various people in government so that they can present their programs of action in line with the thrust of her excellency, president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, for complete transparency. This will provide opportunities for the country's lawmakers to share to the public, more especially their constituents, their legislative agenda by way of person-to-person interviews.

American Studies Association of the Philippines (ASAP) General Conference

THE AMERICAN Studies Association of the Philippines (Asap) will hold its Annual General Conference on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Conference Hall, 4/F Dalupan Building, University of the East (UE), C.M. Recto Avenue, Manila.

The theme: "*Religious* Convergences@Asap *2004.com.*" takes on a new track by exploring the interdisciplinary convergences between religion and related disciplines and by revisiting the contributions of religious organization to Philippine education. ASAP 2004's aims are: 1) to explore the relationship between religion and science, religion, languages and literature, religion and politics and other issues, and b) as an offshoot of the conference on Thomasite contribution to Philippine education, re-evaluate the contributions of different waves of American religious groups to Philippine education.

The Keynote Address shall be given by Bro. Andrew Gonzalez Presidential Adviser on Research and Academic Affairs, DLSU; Dr. Bruce Armstrong, Cultural Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Manila, shall give the Opening Message. Invited speakers are nationally and internationally known scholars with expertise on the interdisciplinary areas of religion and religious history.

All lifetime and regular members of Asap are invited. For registration and reservations call up 735-8539, UE College of Arts and Sciences-Manila.

NFA continues relief operations in typhoon affected areas

THE NATIONAL Authority continues to release rice for typhoon victims and assures the availability and stability of rice in areas affected by the series of typhoons that recently hit the country.

As of Dec. 4, the food agency had already released a total of 22,187 bags of rice to typhoon Winnie and Yoyong victims.

NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. said the agency is coordinating with relief agencies such as the National Disaster Coordinating Council .(NDCC), Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the local government units (LGUs) in the affected areas for the issuance of relief assistance in accordance with the existing memorandum of agreements between the NFA and the said agencies.

Tan also assured that NFA maintains sufficient rice stocks in the worst hit areas of Regions III, IV and V to meet the relief requirements of the typhoon victims.

In accordance with the NFA's disaster preparedness MOAs with relief agencies, rice issuances were as follows: NDCC, 8,465 bags; LGUs, 6,864 bags; DSWD, 2,196 bags; PNRC, 1,200 bags; legislators, 50 bags; non-government organizations (NGOs), 3,062 bags; and PAGCOR, 350 bags.

Meanwhile, he NFA's Search and Rescue team has joined other agencies in the relief operations in Baler and Dingalan.

For more information on the NFA's relief operations, the public may send their inquiries, complaints and suggestions via the Text NFA Program to mobile number 0917-6210927.

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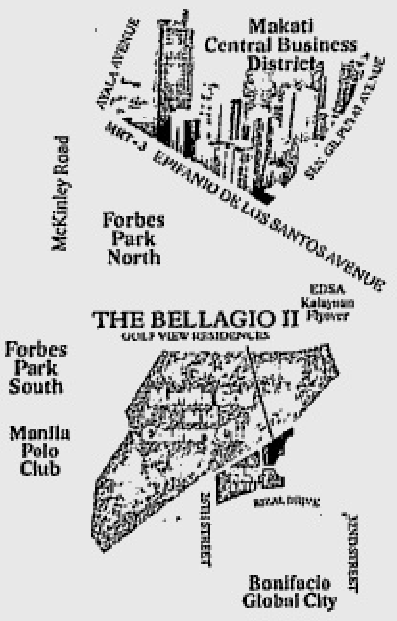
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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Maligayang Pasko!! mula sa NIKON® HOME APPLIANCES

Treadmill buying guide

Part one

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

THE TREADMILL is the most popular and user-friendly fitness equipment at home and in the gym. It comes in two types—motorized and non-motorized.

Human-powered treadmills don't require electricity and cost much less but have serious disadvantages.

Here's what the American College of Sports Medicine has to say on the matter: "Manual treadmills are less expensive and safer because the running belt stops running when you do. However, manual treadmills usually have smaller running belts, making it difficult to jog or run, let alone maintain a brisk walk. Often, the difficulty in getting the belt to move smoothly on a non-motorized treadmill increases the likelihood of holding on to the handrail in an effort to generate power, causing an inconsistent pace.

"This inconsistent pace may cause muscle strain or difficulty in elevating heart rate. Additionally, the holding on may elevate blood pressure from breath holding. Exercise at home should be easy and something to look forward to. If it is difficult to get the machine to work, you are less likely to exercise. For these reasons, you may want to consider a motorized treadmill."

However, motorized treadmills are also the most expensive fitness equipment.

If you are thinking of buying a treadmill for home use, here are some tips to help you make an informed choice and get the most for your money.

Stability

A sturdy treadmill makes you feel as stable as if you are walking on solid ground. A flimsy machine will rock back and forth making you feel insecure and seasick.

To check stability, stand on the side ramps while the treadmill is running at a slow speed. Incline the machine to the highest level and jump a couple of times on the ramps. Also try shifting your weight from side to side. The machine should remain stable and should not shake, rattle or wobble.

The treadmill frame should be made of aluminum or steel. Aluminum will not rust but it is considerably more expensive than steel. All major joints should be welded for structural strength, not bolted. The more bolts there are, the bigger the chance they will come loose and make the machine unstable.

Motor

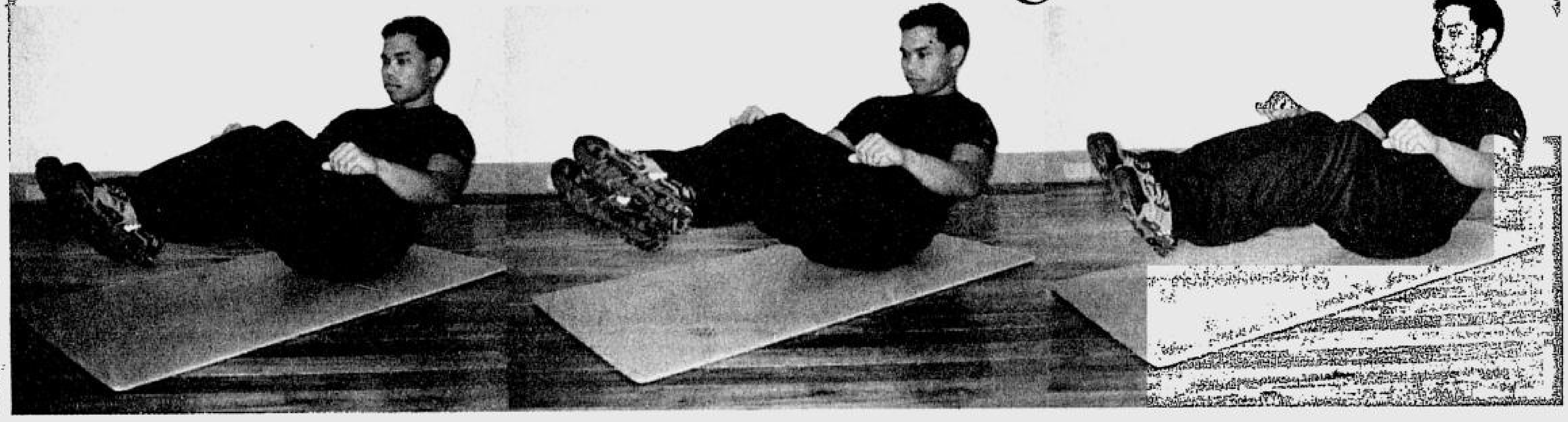
Treadmill motors are rated in terms of "horsepower" (HP). Don't pay any attention to "peak power." What really

TREADMILL/ C3

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Seated ab skiing



THIS advance exercise strengthens and firms the abs and waist.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Sit with your knees bent and legs together. Pretend that you are holding and balancing a pole in front of you.
2. Lean back and lift your feet off the mat.
3. Keep your upper body motionless while you tilt your knees from side to side.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions.
5. Return to starting position.

Performance tips:

1. If you are a beginner try the following easier options before performing the advance level:

a. Keep your hands on the floor so your abs won't have to work so hard.

b. Hold the imaginary pole but don't do continuous repetitions. Lean back and do one set on the right and the left. Put your feet down and rest. Repeat.

2. Avoid this exercise if it bothers your back.

3. Place extra cushioning (example: a folded towel) under your buttocks if your tailbone feels uncomfortable.

4. To make the exercise harder, place a weighted medicine ball or dumbbell between your knees.

Repetitions:

One repetition equals tilting to the right and left. Do 10 repetitions.

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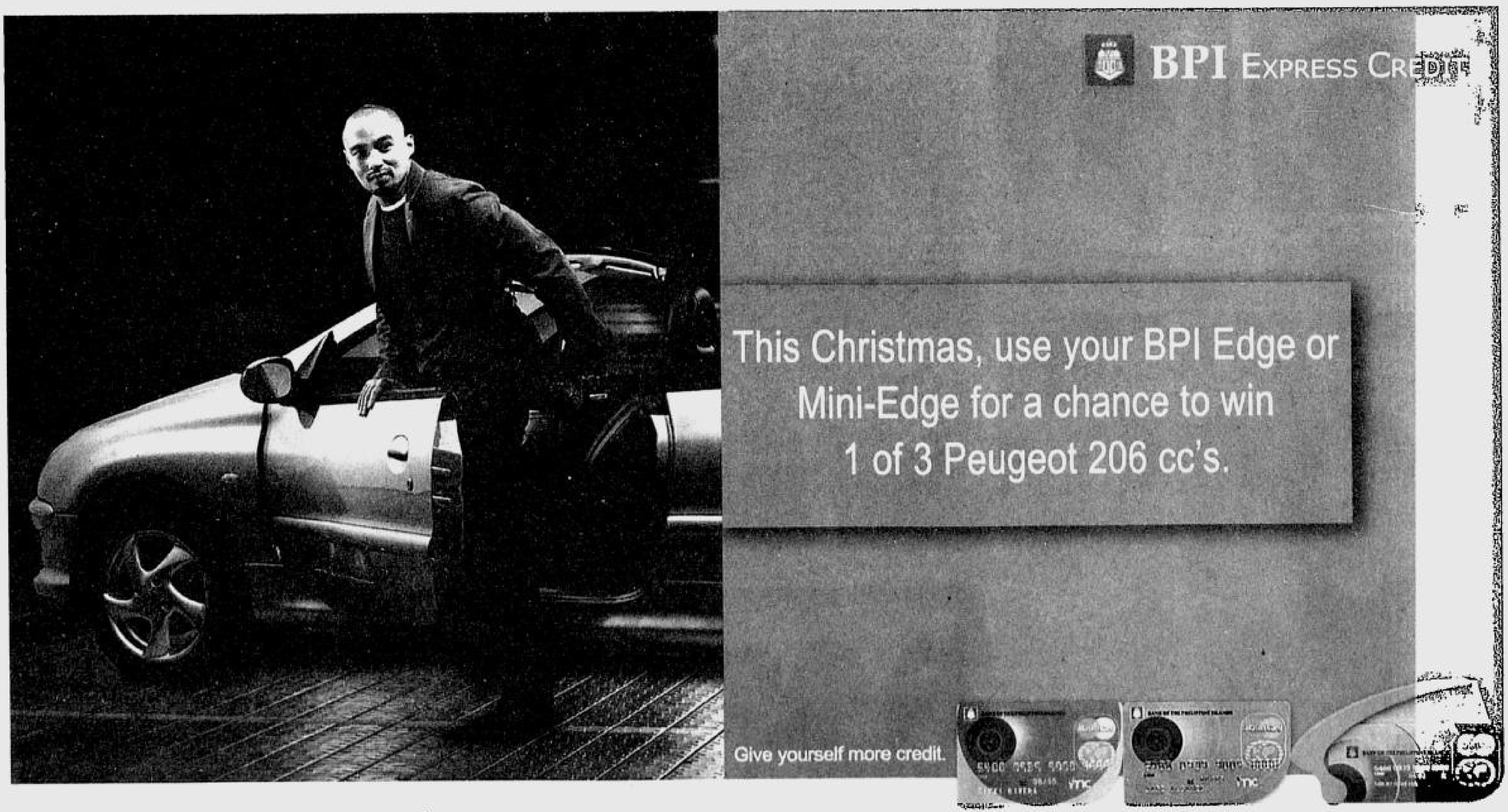
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PHILIPPINE Airlines' partying pack: Sunshine gal Ria Domingo, Carlo Bello, hotshot executive vice president Henry So Uy, showgirl Jennifer Gagliano, Tess Garces, Debbie Cuyegkeng, Dino Molino, Rene Soliman and Cesar Enciso

BERCK Cheng and Lisa Gokongwei-Cheng

ROLLIE Estabillo, PAL vice president for corporate communications

JO Palmer, brilliant manager for Asia-Pacific of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

LAS Vegas bigwigs: Dan Shumny, Harry Kassap and Hylton Fothergill, jetted in to promote their fun city.

MEGA businessmen Miguel Estrada and Arjun Shroff

Manille gets a glimpse of Vegas

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by
Alex Van Hagen
on Kodak Max

HOT HOTSHOTS: Metrobank Card chair Cindy Valenzuela, George Ty, Metrobank Card mega president Anne Young, and Mary Ty

FUN couple: businessman Sammy Yap and wife Therese

THESE gals love to party: Eye-catchers Zandra Ty, Jean Frances Chua and Angie Tan

WOMEN of style Pinky Kalaw and Christine Divinagracia take their martini in next year's color, aquamarine.

LADIES of substance: Fashionable Vivian Chiu and cool Myrna Alberto

MENTION Las Vegas, and I immediately have a vision of glitz, glamour, gaming, shows, and magnificent humongous hotels, all packaged for fun taken to the extreme, *palanggas*.

"What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," the locals would say. Very tongue-in-cheek advice for visitors to the world's mega entertainment capital.

Well, before I could bat an eyelash, I was invited to meet a delegation of Las Vegas' top tourism people that visited Manille a couple of sleeps ago, all brought in by our pal, Philippine Airlines, *natch*! PAL just happens to be the only carrier from Asia that flies there.

What the delegation had to tell us about the latest in Vegas obviously wasn't meant to just stay there. Yes, dahlings, there's a lot of super exciting new developments in Vegas now and in the coming year.

This we got from the gal on the move, **Jo Palmer**, manager for Asia-Pacific of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority; **Dan Shumny**, mega vice president of sales of the popular Golden Nugget Hotel; super nice **Hylton Fothergill**, international sales manager of Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters; and **Harry Kassap**, administrator for market development of McCarran International Airport.

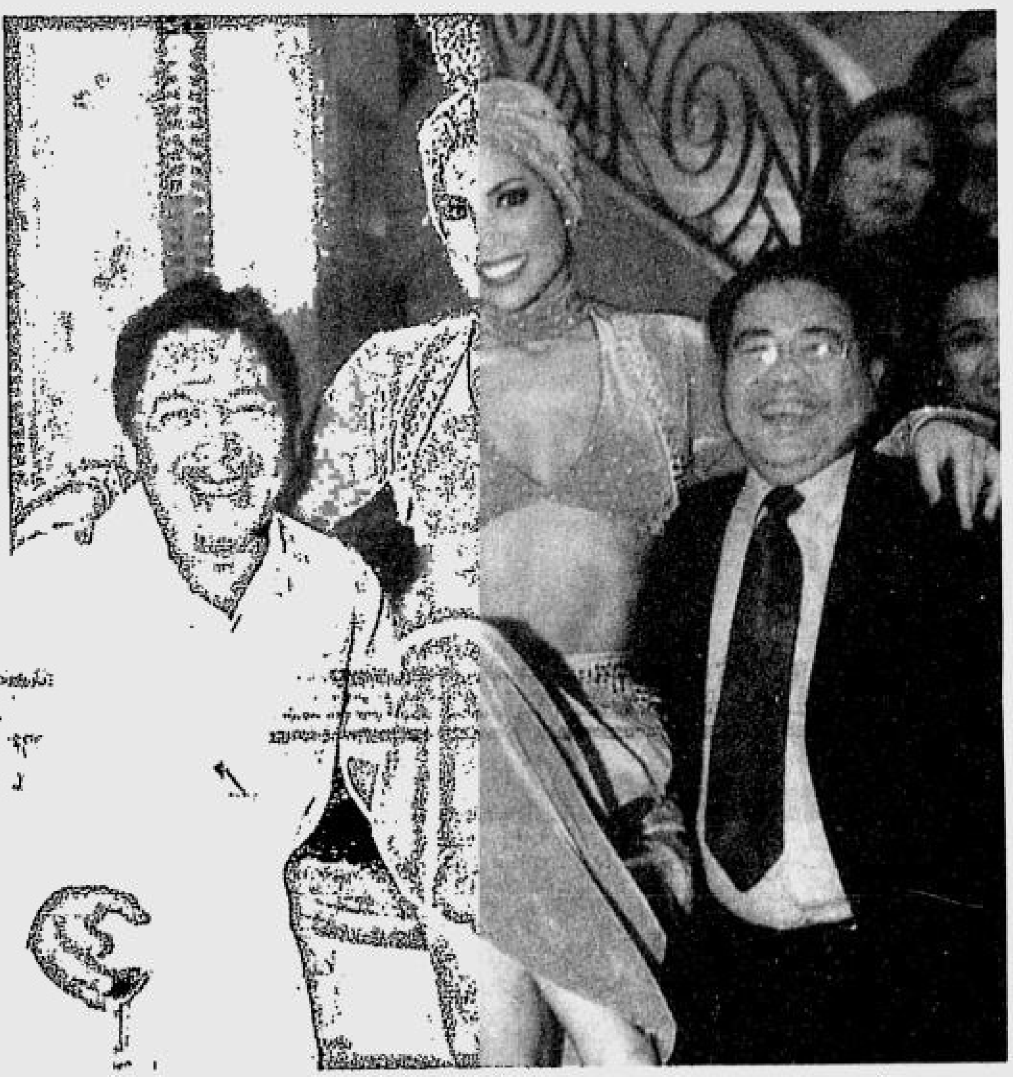
Naturellement, palanggas, a Las Vegas function wouldn't be complete without the familiar icon of the city, the showgirl, in the person of the stunningly gorgeous **Jennifer Lee Gagliano.**

The leggy and wow Jennifer had all the men, including PAL's brilliant president **Jaime J. Bautista**; executive vice president, taipan **Henry So Uy**; hotshot vice presidents **Rollie Estabillo, Felix Cruz** and **Jing Javier**; and assistant vice president, cyber smart **Jess Garcia** flocking to her for souvenir photos.

Las Vegas is turning 100 on May 15, 2005, with "a party to end all parties," says Jo Palmer.

But the fun begins on New Year's Eve when a multimedia extravaganza lights up the Strip and Downtown areas. At midnight, a spectacular fireworks display will usher in Vegas' centennial year.

There will be a "helldorado" Parade, reenactment of historical events and the unveiling of the world's largest birthday cake weighing over 130,000 pounds! Vegas sure knows how to throw a party. Cool!


HOTSHOTS and the show gal: Vegas showgirl Jennifer Gagliano is flanked by two happy gentlemen—PAL president Jaime J. Bautista (left) and vice president Felix "Bong" Cruz

Even now, the city is buzzing with activity. The long-awaited monorail system is now open, allowing visitors to travel the whole length of the Strip. There are also free light shows every night, among other fab events.

For world-class entertainment, nothing beats this city. Last month, the awe-inspiring Cirque du Soleil began its fourth Las Vegas production, "KA," at the huge MGM Grand.

The incomparable **Celine Dion** continues to pack them in at her show, "A New Day," at the Colosseum of Caesar's Palace. She flies on stage, her piano flies on stage, and an expensive audio-visual screen takes the audience from outer space to European town squares.

Now, that's really a wow show!

Yes, *palanggas*, there's never a dull moment in Vegas, believe me, and the short trans-Pacific flight in our very own Philippine Airlines is definitely well worth it. Ahh, viva Las Vegas!

New Yorkers celebrate

Antonio V. Martel Jr., president of Harrison Plaza (the country's first shopping mall), and his *trés* famous philanthropist wife, **Belen Lovina Ticzon-Martel**, hosted a super fun lunch get-together when their long-time pal now New Yorker, **Josie del Rosario Fernandez**, celebrated another great year in her colorful life, *palanggas*. The celebrator was side by side with her husband, man for all seasons **Willie Fernandez**, no less.

The fun affair was held at the popular Palisadium that has now become a landmark at Cliffside Park in New Jersey. The restaurant gives you a commanding view of George Washington bridge and the Manhattan skyline.

Circulating among the lunch bunch were the so-grown up and articulate eye-catcher, **Antonia T. Martel**, only child of Belen L. T. and Don Antonio Martel, who is a Fordham University scholar; and Josie's favorite godchild, **Butch** and his wife **Olga Achacoso**, with their son RB; **Juliet Lovina Ticzon**; Dr. **Maria Luisa R. Ticzon**; **Remy de Leon**; **Tony** and **Sylvia Cuaycong**; **Carlos** and **Beth Canlas**; **Willie** and Josie's children **Alan** and **Glen**, with his wife **Shigeko**; the birthday girl's brod, **Al del Rosario** and wife **Lorna**, with their children, **Mae** and **Jules**; and **Pete T. Santos**; plus so many more former Manille personas, now all richly settled in the Big Apple, and loving every moment of it, *palanggas*.

CELEBRATOR Josie del Rosario-Fernandez with husband Willie

THE HOSTS of the lunch bunch: Belen Lovina Ticzon with husband, Antonio V. Martel Jr.

HAVING a fun time are Juliet Lovina Ticzon (seated) and Benny de Leon; with (standing) Olga Achacoso, Lorna del Rosario, Remy de Leon, Josie Fernandez, Careng and Beth Canlas

It's here

Leave it to the country's largest bank to revolutionize credit in the Philippines, making it more hip, more exciting, and unquestionably more privilege-packed.

As I watched 'M Here! being introduced, I could see right away all the fresh offerings a Metrobank card holder could avail of.

The new card was introduced in a trendy cocktail event at the swinging M Café in Greenbelt 4. 'M Here! invitees were ushered to the Bamboo Park where a large screen was set against towering bamboos.

Trés visible was hunk **Marc Nelson** in a tweed suit and tie by avant garde designer **Avel Bacudio**, highlighting the bright colors of 'M Here!

Brilliant **Anne Marie Young**, president of the Metrobank Card Corporation, no less, explained, "Metrobank credit cards go beyond credit, making shopping and dining much more exciting. At the end of the day, it's about being of value."

Hey, *palanggas*, 'M! will be accepted in most establishments, including Lorenzo Resort Boracay, and a Metrobank cardholder can enjoy all its perks, dahlings. Not bad, huh!

Just look for the 'M Here! icon.

MR. and Miss Nutrilite Joseph Peña and Olivia Woods (second and third from left) are awarded by Amway Philippines' Suzanne Comagon (right), corporate services manager, and Joy Andres (left), product marketer for Nutrilite

Fitness tilt culminates Dec. 17

NUTRILITE, Amway's leading brand of nutritional formula, is supporting Slimmer's World International Great Bodies 2004, the largest fitness competition in Asia-Pacific.

"The contest aims to encourage Filipinos to live a healthier and more enjoyable life," said Suzanne Comagon, corporate services manager, Amway Philippines. "We believe that the foundation for building a healthy body and a positive state of mental well-being not only involves proper nutrition, rest and mental attitude but also a healthy exercise regime."

During the fitness competition's press launch, Amway Philippines chose candidates Joseph Peña and Olivia Woods as Mr. and Miss Nutrilite, their bets for the top spots in the Slimmer's World International Great Bodies 2004 contest. "Aside from their obvious passion in keeping their bodies fit and healthy, both exude confidence, charisma and wit which make them stand out from the rest of the candidates," said Joy Andres, product marketer for Nutrilite, Amway Philippines.

Peña, 30, is a supervising engineer. Woods, 25, is a post-graduate student.

The Slimmer's World International Great Bodies 2004 contest culminates on Dec. 17.

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Treadmill buying guide

From page C1

matters is "continuous power." The minimum requirement is 1.5 continuous HP. A two to three continuous HP is better. A bigger motor will run more efficiently, handle heat better and last longer than a smaller one.

Be wary of manufacturers who make a big deal about the peak power capacity of their machines. They are usually trying to hide the fact that their treadmills have a low continuous power rating.

One way to check the power of the motor is to set the machine to its lowest speed and firmly plant your feet on the belt (take a wide stride with one foot in front of the other). If the motor is strong enough, you should be gently pushed backward. If you can make the belt stop moving or if the belt is making grinding and groaning noises, the motor is not powerful enough to give you a good walking or running workout.

All treadmills make noise but it shouldn't be so loud that you can't watch television or listen to music while working out.

Deck

The slab under the moving belt, it should be one-inch thick to prevent cracking under the pressure of a person walking or running on top of it. It should be laminated to reduce friction building up between it and the belt. A flexible deck can reduce impact to your joints by 30 percent.

Many treadmills use rubber or foam shock absorbers underneath the deck. But over time the rubber or foam becomes compressed losing its cushioning effect. Superior treadmills use an ultraviolet-cured polyurethane shock absorbing material that does not wear out and offers a more even walking surface.

Belt

The belt should be of a thin multi-ply material for better heat dissipation, longer life and less chance of slipping. Belt width can be anywhere from 17"-22" and the length from 51"-61". If you are a large or tall person, choose a wider and longer belt. Belts that are too narrow and too short do not have a natural feel and increase the chances of your being thrown off.

Look for a machine that is self-waxing or lubricating unless you prefer to remember to lubricate the belt yourself every month. There is also the mess to consider. Without the right amount of lubrication, friction and heat will build up, shortening the life of the belt, deck and motor.

Just like a car's wheels, a treadmill's belt and rollers need to be balanced and aligned regularly. The dealer's service team should do the initial calibration when the machine is installed in your home. They should do balancing and alignment every three to four months. This is why you should buy only from a reliable local dealer.

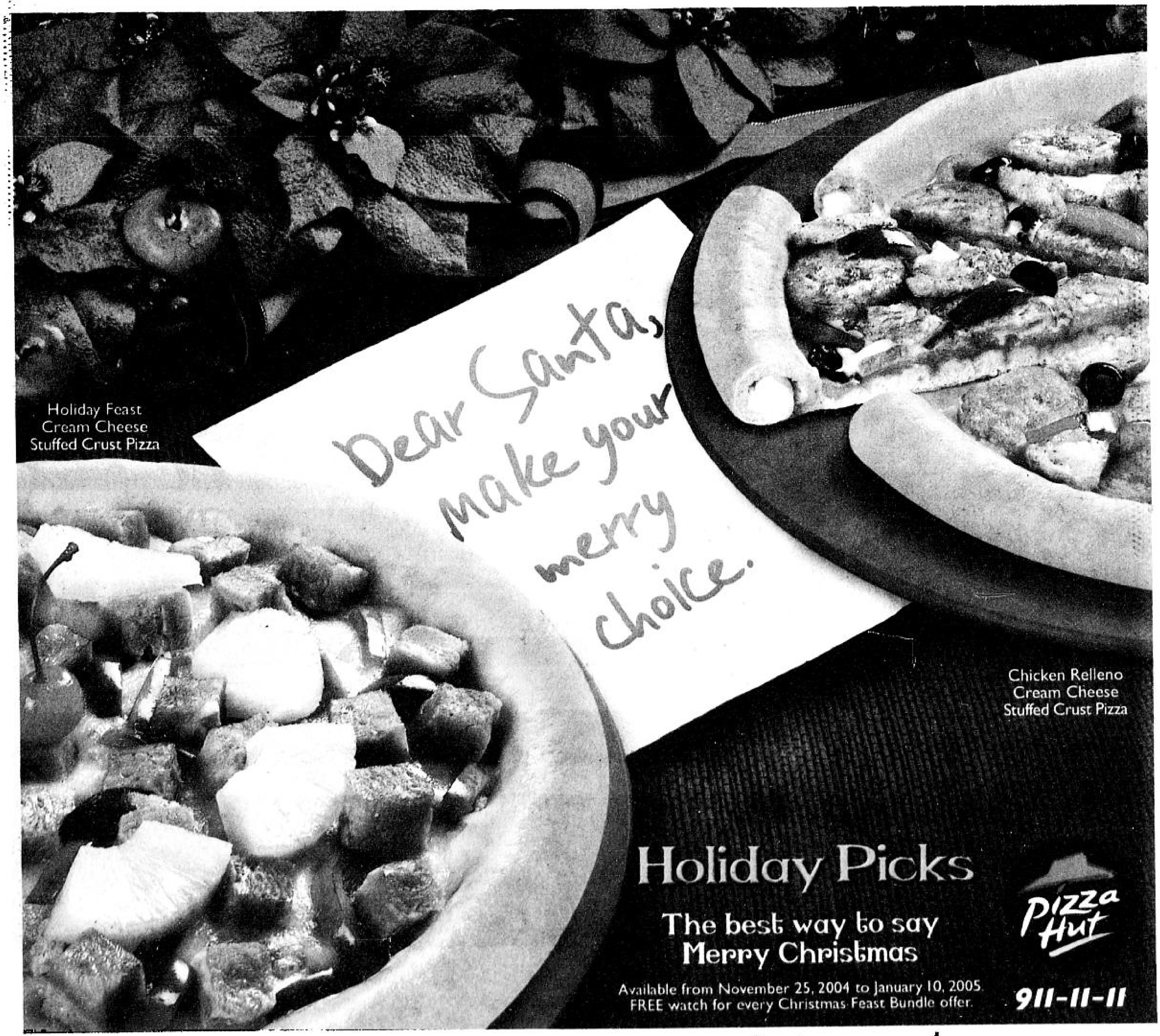
A misaligned belt that is too loose, too tight or off-center will not only wear out prematurely, it will make the motor work harder and hotter than necessary. Some motors overheated because of a misaligned belt.

Even with proper maintenance, the belt, deck and rollers will eventually have to be replaced if you use your treadmill regularly. Heat, friction, excessive moisture and dust are the top enemies of a treadmill.

Lengthen the life of your treadmill by vacuuming your machine and its surrounding area weekly. Pay close attention to the space between the belt and the deck and especially underneath the treadmill by inclining it first.

Sources: American College of Sports Medicine, Runner's World Magazine, and Better Homes & Gardens Treadmill Buying Guide.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info



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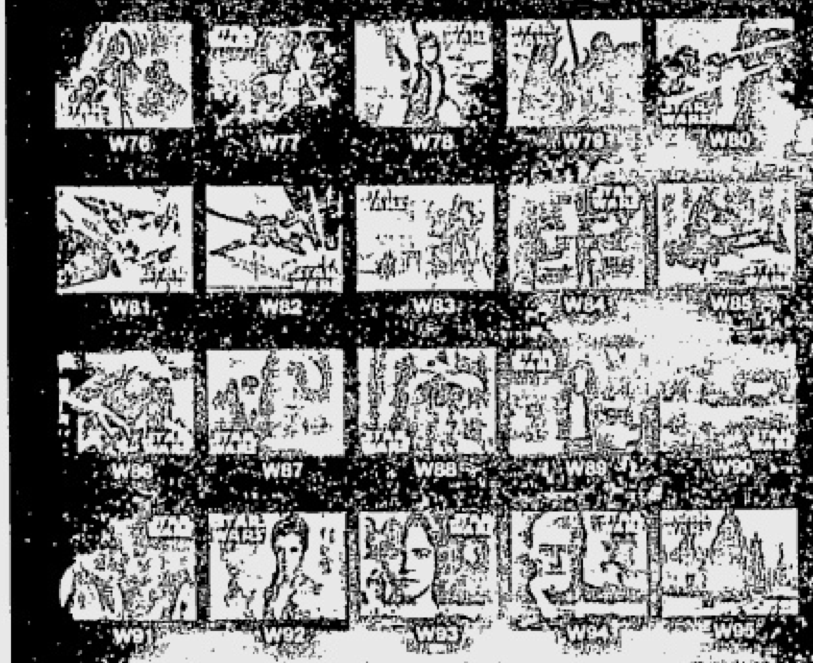
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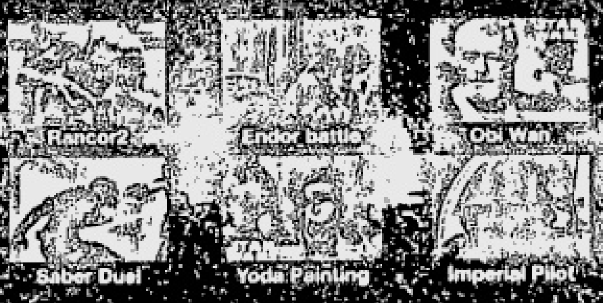
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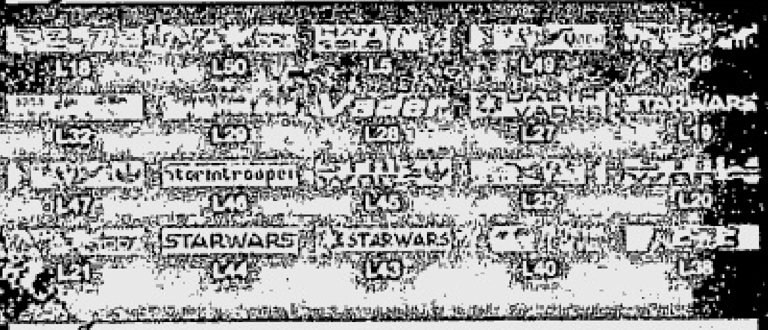
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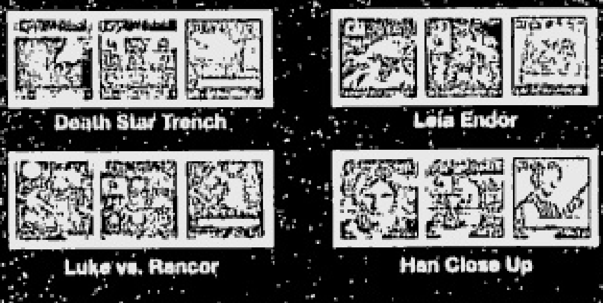
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Yoda's Theme	N102	T102
Imperial March	N103	T103
Ben's Death	N104	T104
Cantina Band I	N105	T105
Cantina Band II	N106	T106
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Ewok's Theme	N110	T110

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Natural way is better for wellness

HERE are answers to readers' many concerns. There are various ways to prevent health problems and solving health conditions. As always, the natural way is better for wellness.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

What is your suggestion for insomnia?

If you can't sleep and keep tossing and turning in bed or even worry about your inability to sleep, well, help is here.

Determine what causes your sleeplessness.

- Drugs (for hypertension, diabetes, ulcers or allergies; tranquilizers, etc.) can interrupt your sleep. Know the side effects of your medicines.
- Poor diet (rich in fat and preservatives)
- Emotional/mental fatigue and stress

Insomnia is a symptom of 40 different disorders so it is best to consult a physician. Once you have ruled out drugs and illness, then you can start an alternative therapy.

Avoid the following foods before bedtime:

- Alcohol (especially red wine), caffeine, nicotine, cheeses, bacon, sausages (these prevent your brain from releasing serotonin, a hormone needed for sleep)

Take a glass of warm non-fat milk or have a turkey dinner (rich in tryptophan), an amino acid that stimulates the brain to release serotonin.

Do the slow-breathing exercise. Inhale five counts, hold three counts, exhale five. This ought to slow down your breathing. Through guided imagery, visualize that you are in your ideal place of relaxation, a sanctuary that is peaceful and undisturbed.

Take a vitamin-mineral therapy: one chelated calcium, 250 mg, and one magnesium, 125 mg (three times a day, plus three tablets of each half an hour before bedtime; they work together to produce serotonin); chamomile, valerian root, skullcap tea daily before bedtime. If this fails, take 1-2 mg of melatonin 15 minutes before bedtime.

Visualization

Imagine you are going down a stairway with 20 steps. With every step you take, count backwards from 20 to 1. The last step will take you to a calm, placid lake shore. Upon reaching the last step, imagine you have a small stone to throw across the water. The stone skims the surface and lands on the bottom of this clear, peaceful lake. Feel relaxed now.

Is there a natural way to tap the body's healing power?

Yes, and you can begin right now. Here is your action plan:

Remove rich food from the diet—all red meat, fish roe, fatty foods, fried fish, whole milk, even low-fat milk/dairy products (includes cheese, butter), sugar, white flour, spicy foods/condiments, and most canned/processed/manufactured foods.

Note: These foods lead to obesity and benign prostate enlargement. Replace with a variety of vegetables, fruits, legumes (beans), whole grains, seeds and nuts.

ILLUSTATION BY L.A. MISTADES

Cut out alcohol and smoking completely.

Start an exercise regimen that will be a lifetime commitment.

Practice meditation daily and set aside some prayer time.

How do I strengthen my immune system?

Know that your body is exposed to attacks by free radical chemicals (which, according to the latest research, makes the body rancid). The free radicals, highly active and damaging atoms, can be caused by pollution, processed food rich in coloring and preservatives, stress, poor diets, etc. Boosting your immune system is like wearing an armor against free radical attack.

Consume more antioxidants, substances that can neutralize free radicals, via vegetables and fruits. Some antioxidant super rich foods are tomatoes, oranges, strawberries, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, and most green leafy veggies.

Congratulations are in order

The Farm at San Benito (Lipa, Batangas) won the distinguished Spa Asia Awards in Singapore—Best Holistic Healing Program, Best Retreat, Best New Age Activity. Call 7513498.

Mandala Spa in Boracay bagged the Spa Asia Crystal Award for Best Rejuvenation Program. Call (036)2885858.

Love and light!

References: The Sleep Rx - Norman Ford

Earl Mindell's Vitamin Bible for the 21st Century

Watch "Quest for Well-Being" ANC Channel 21, 4 p.m., Sunday, produced by ABS-CBN Foundation and the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care, hosted by Diane Castillejo-Garcia and myself.

Listen to "Ma Beauty Po Naman", 6 p.m., Sunday, DZMM.

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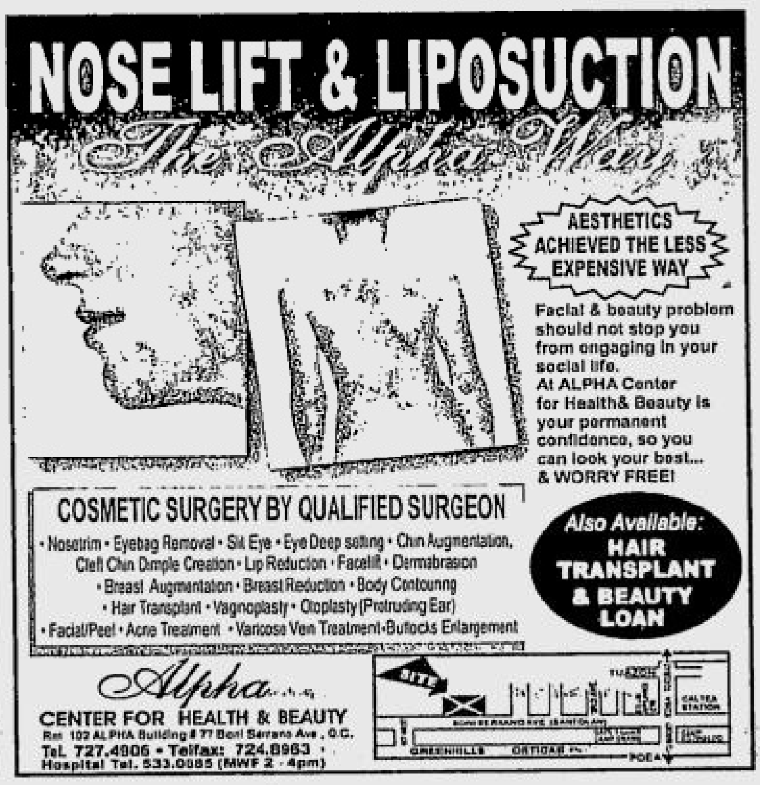
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SPEEDO, the number one brand in swimwear, has diversified its products.

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GIDGET Bandeau Tankini from Speedo's Autumn/Winter 2004 collections

In the swim of things at new concept shop

CELEBRITY guest model Assunta da Rossi dons a Japanese-inspired modern leaf one-piece Speedo swimsuit.

SPEEDO has opened the doors of its recently renovated concept shop at Glorietta 4, Ayala Center.

Renowned architects, Messrs Checkland Kindleysides, based in Leicester UK, designed the fresh global retail store concept for Speedo.

This latest concept aims to create a "statement" within each product category of the brand. The Beach area is highlighted by an Orange feature wall finish and used to display all products in the beach category. The Pool Area is highlighted by a Blue feature wall finish and used to display all products in the pool category.

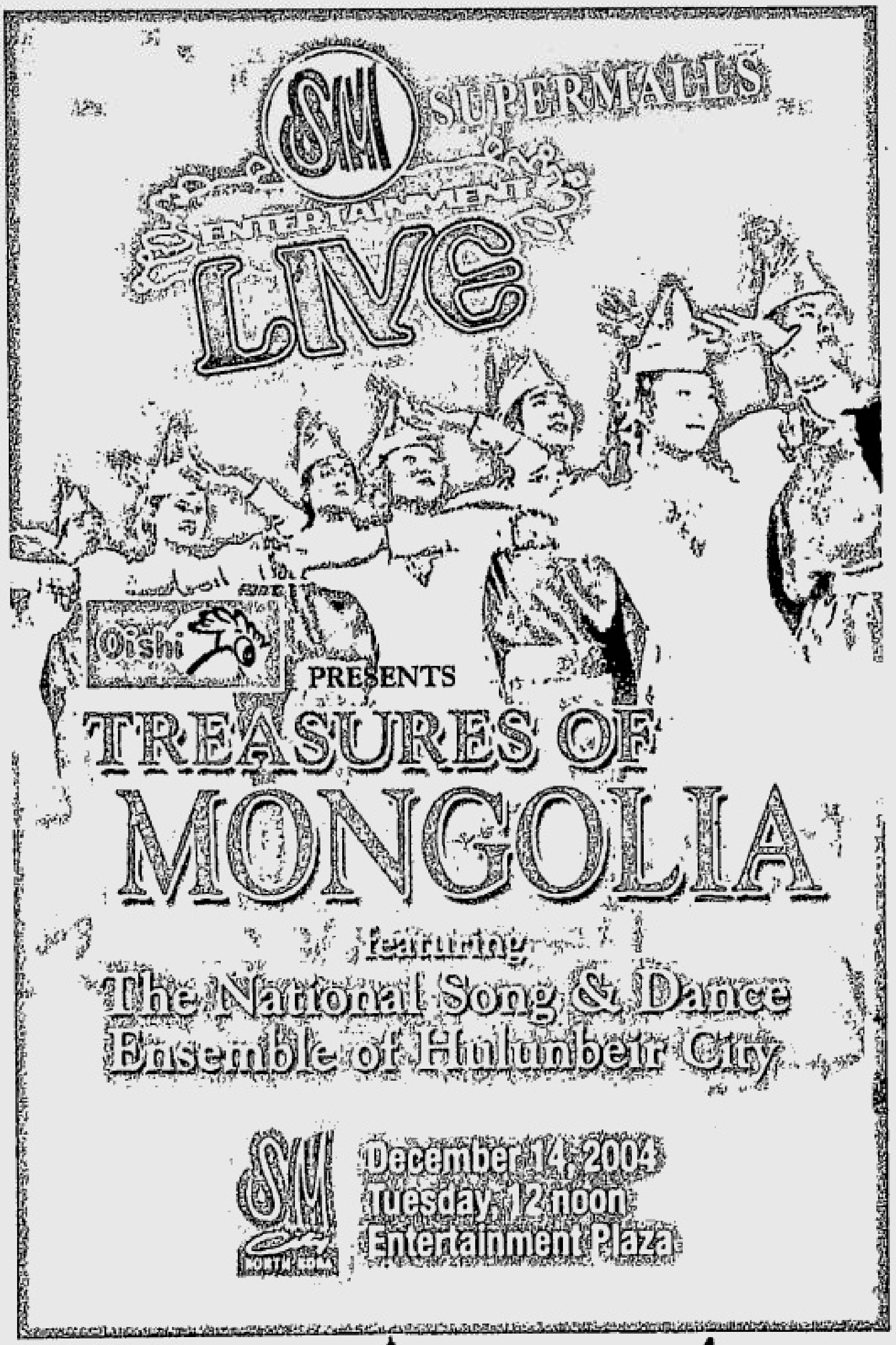
Speedo prides itself in its innovative approach to its products, which include a whole range of leisure, training and competition swimwear for adults and kids. The products are designed to suit the needs of all sports and fitness enthusiasts, as well as individuals who just want to bask under the sun.

Speedo offers a wide assortment of fashionable beachwear and fitness apparel, accessories and equipment that include eyewear, sports watches and sports underwear.

Speedo concept stores in Manila are also located in SM Megamall, Robinsons Place Ermita, Alabang Town Center, The Podium, Eastwood Citywalk II and Paseo de Santa Rosa. In the Southern region, Speedo concept stores can be found at Ayala Center Cebu, SM City Cebu, Gaisano Mactan, Robinsons Place Bacolod, SM City Davao, and SM City Cagayan de Oro.

AT THE OPENING of the Speedo Concept Shop are (from left) Chito Ilagan, Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president; celebrity model/actress Assunta da Rossi; Speedo's VP for merchandising Vandana C. Mahtani; and Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) president Tomas Carrasco.

SPEEDO Philippines and Philippine Amateur Swimming Association officials (from left): national training director Anthony Lozada; PASA president Chito Ilagan; Speedo's VP for operations Manish C. Mahtani; PASA's Odette Chiongbian and Speedo's Emmy Buccat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Relaxation in a busy place

BODY Tune, which started the trend for mall-based spas in Metro Manila, is bringing its services to Fairview with the recent opening of a Body Tune branch at the upper G/F Annex Bldg., SM City Fairview.

Body Tune owner and manager Stephen Sia says when the spa opened its first branch at an SM mall, it was to offer mallgoers an opportunity to relax after hours of busy shopping. "It's like bringing a place of relaxation nearer to busy people," he explains.

Topping the list of services Body Tune offers at its branches is traditional Thai massage, administered by therapists trained in Thailand at the famous Wat Po Temple.

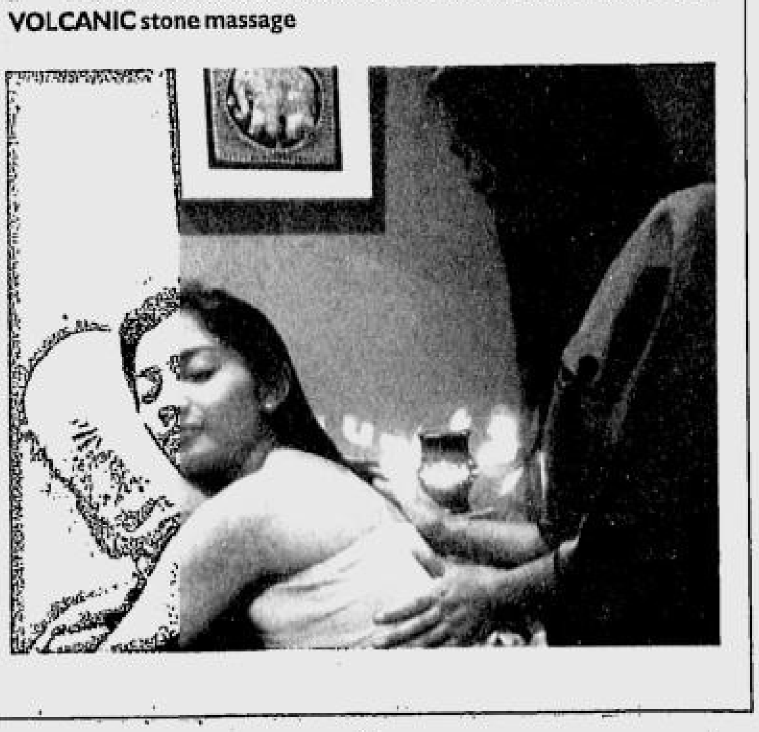
"Our method uses point pressure, muscle stretching and compressions," says Sia. "It is done in a rhythmic, gently rocking manner to relieve the body of pain and muscle tension and strengthen and rejuvenate the body. It also improves blood circulation and allows for better absorption of body nutrients."

A session of traditional Thai massage at Body Tune lasts for two hours, unlike the usual one-hour massage sessions in other spas.

Full body treatments include body scrub, moor mud body wrap, whitening scrub and slimming mud wrap. Also available are facial massage and a variety of foot and hand treatments.

Call 9365768.

VOLCANIC stone massage


RELAX and rejuvenate with chair massage

Bodies of work

CARMI Martin (left) and Cristina Gonzales-Romualdez

THINK "Carmi Martin" and your mind automatically visualizes the famous and talented actress who has remained shapely and sexy through the years. You can't imagine her otherwise. Honestly, after all this time, have you ever seen Carmi Martin fat?

At the height of her showbiz career, Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez was the most sought-after leading lady by some of the country's popular action stars and dramatic actors because of her gorgeous looks.

Gina Alajar's consummate artistry, along with her beautiful and compelling screen presence, has resulted in multi-awarded performances. It is only fitting that she is among the ranks of Philippine cinema's highly acclaimed actresses of all time.

Marjorie Barretto is a gifted actress in her own right and her modest charm is highly appealing.

Of course, they are celebrities and, as such, are always expected to look good. But these "heavenly bodies" are only human, too. They have gone through what most women have experienced through the years—they have gained weight and have felt insecure about the bulges in their bodies.

After trying out a few strategies on losing excess weight and failing, the four women sought the services of Marie France upon the recommendation of friends.

"In two months, I saw the difference already," said Barretto. "My hips, buttocks, thighs and waistline became slimmer! My favorite treatment is Endermologiè. I used to have cellulite but not anymore. My tummy even became smaller and I noticed that I was regaining my sexy shape. I lost a lot of inches of fat all over my body. I stopped going to the gym when I started at Marie France. It's faster for me."

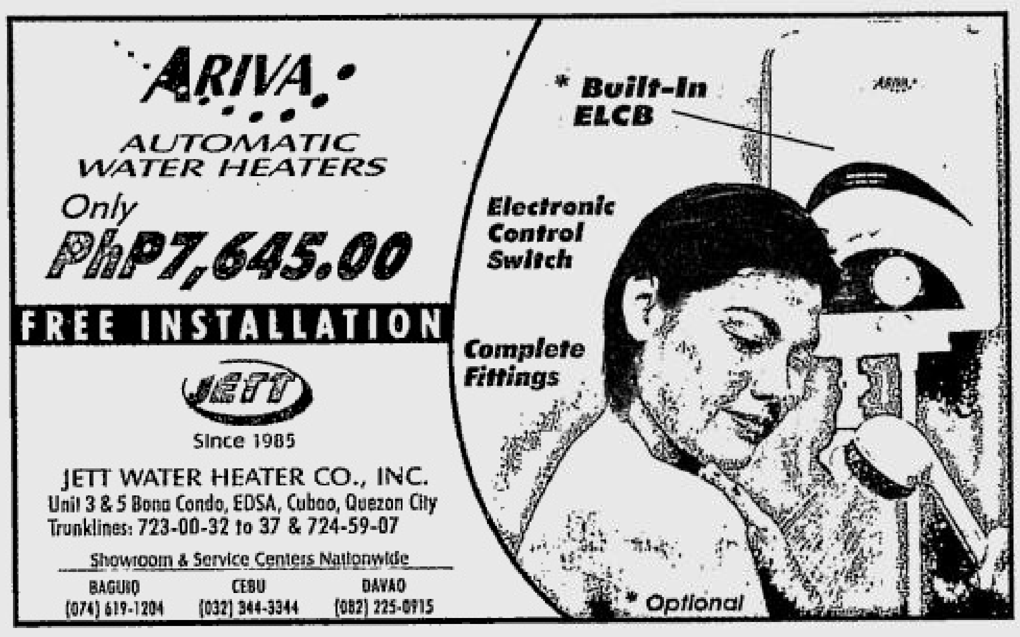
Alajar, on the other hand, said she realized she looked much better when she started losing weight at Marie France. "The bulges around my arms and waistline were reduced. The Physique Inch-Loss is my favorite. It's like exercising while you're sleeping!"

"My legs are slimmer now with the help of Endermologie and the Fat Mobilization System wrap," said Martin. "They're the size that I've always wanted! Slimming down at Marie France is very effective and safer. It makes your slim shape look more natural unlike other methods."

Gonzales lost 20 lbs in a month at Marie France. "The wrap trimmed down the fat, Endermologie got rid of my cellulite and the Physique toned my arms," she said. "I also followed their food intake guide and that really worked for me, too. Now I'm more active, I feel better, lighter and healthier."

It is inspiring that these women have successfully faced the challenge of becoming and staying slim. It wasn't easy but it was definitely worth it.

Marie France centers are located at Makati, Ortigas, Timog, Binondo, Alabang, Shaw, Congressional, Pampanga and Cebu, tel.no. 894-BODY.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Korres Natural Products founders George and Lena Korres

Spice up your body care regimen

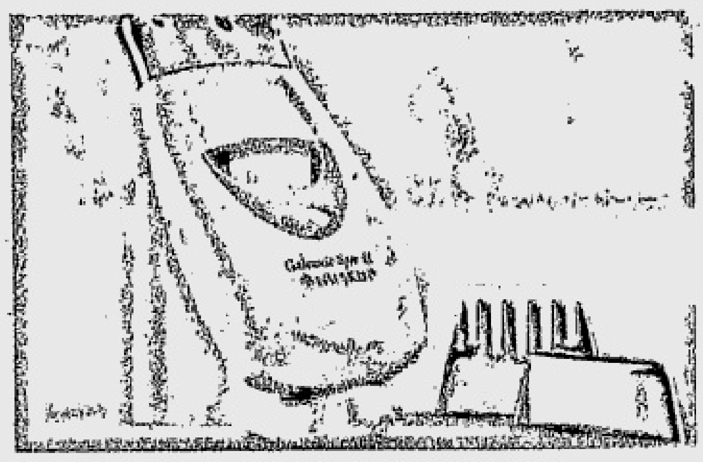
THE GREECE-BASED Korres Natural Products has a complete line of skin, body and hair care products that are made of natural active ingredients like herbs, spices, grains, essential oils and fruits.

Set up by pharmacist George Korres in 1996, Korres Natural Products are formulated to be gentle on the body and to promote a general sense of well-being. Each product is made using natural active ingredients in plants, herbs, flowers and essential oils that target specific needs, such as falling hair or dry skin or even cellulite.

Korres is guided by four basic principles: no harsh chemicals, no inflated promises, quality products, and fair pricing. Its packaging is also eco-friendly.

Shampoos are made with rice protein, sage and nettle, juniper and olive, laurel and echinacea while conditioners are made with almond proteins, camelia milk, and acacia milk. Body care products include body scrub from grape seeds, guava body butter and body milks in citrus, coriander and nutmeg. Shower gels include Bitter Almond, Basil Lemon, Vanilla-Cinnamon and Green Tea.

Korres products are exclusively available at Essenses in Rustan's Department Store.



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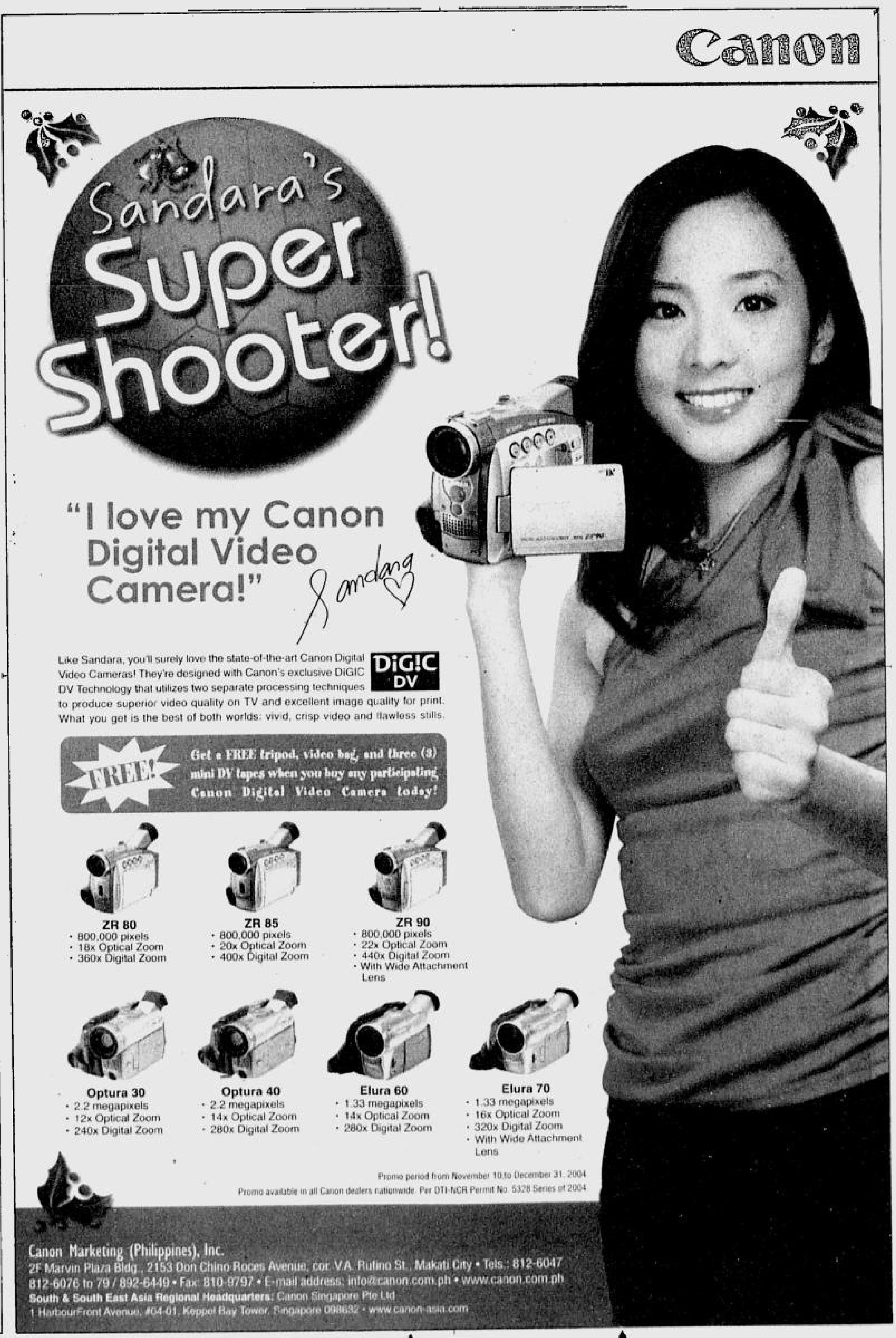
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Stay on the health track this holiday season

FIND out more about pasta and wine in the latest Holiday Issue of Healthy Options News West.

The magazine has timely features on food for the festive season and offers advice on how to keep on the health track despite all the feasting ahead.

Since pasta is likely to be part of most party menus, find out more about it in "Pasta Varieties and Nutrition Ideas."

The story "MSG: Friend or Foe" will help readers find out more about the good and bad sides of vetsin.

In "Wine Matters," check out the "Enjoying Organic Wine" article. Learn more about the Albeti Noya wine, one of the more popular organic brands.

Learn about what goes well with what in "Food and Wine Pairing."

Learn more about organic wine in "Sulfites: Important Facts." Men may find "Wine and Prostate Health" very informative.

You can do your reading while sipping one of Healthy Options' premium organic wines made in the boutique wineries in France, Argentina, Chile, Italy, Spain, and South Africa. You can also get the wines as presents or to liven up holiday dinners.

To get Healthy Options New Digest's latest issue for free, visit a Healthy Options store at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati; .2/L Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; G/L Ayala Center, Cebu City; G/L SM City North EDSA; 2/L SM Manila; SM Bicutan; and SM Pampanga; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; 2/L SM Megamall B, EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

Visit www.healthyoptions.com. ph.

Special Christmas Issue
Healthy Options

Flavor preference reveals person's character

A RECENT study for Listerine PocketPaks at the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago, showed the choice of oral care strip flavor helped reveal a person's character.

Dr. Alan R. Hirsch, neurological director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Formulation, said flavor preferences and personality traits developed at the same time.

The study found that flirtatious and fun-loving people liked the taste of cinnamon. Those who prefer FreshBurst tended to be "take-charge" people, authoritative and powerful.

Coolmint or Peppermint users, the study found, were intellectual and creative who usually preferred their "own space", and were big sports fans. Those who liked bubblegum were action- and goal-oriented and always in control, enjoying physical and mental challenges.

Fruit flavor were chosen by people who tended to be reliable friends, good workers, and team players.

Pfizer Consumer Healthcare's Listerine PocketPaks has three flavors to suit different personalities—Coolmint, Cinnamon and FreshBurst: It kills about 99.9 percent of germs that cause bad breath and gives a clean-mouth feeling that lasts up to 90 minutes. The oral care strips are sugar- and calorie-free.

Listerine PocketPaks are available in supermarkets, drugstores and convenient stores nationwide at P85 for the 24-strip pack and P190 for the 72-strip value pack.

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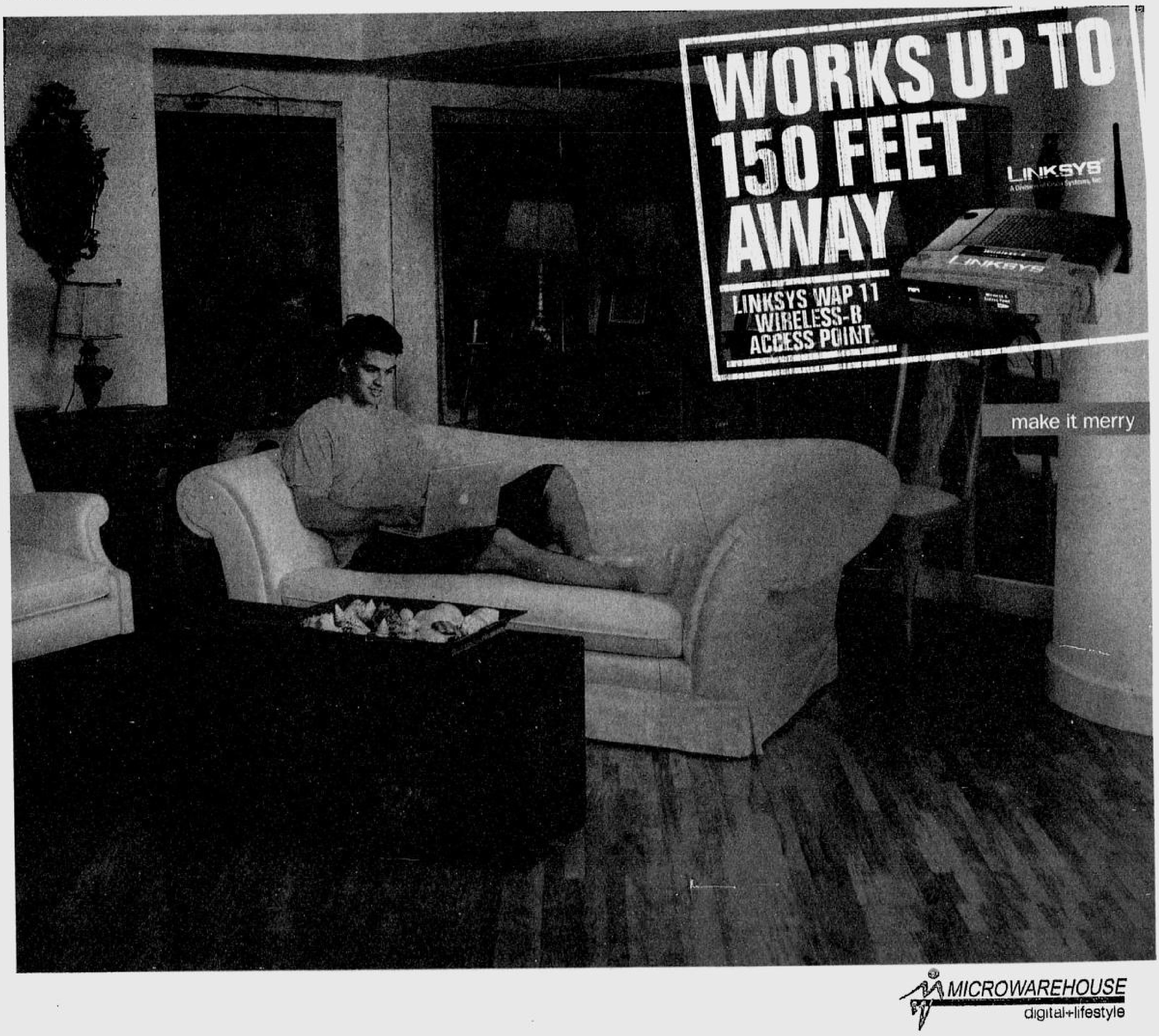
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Grief and solace in Cavinti

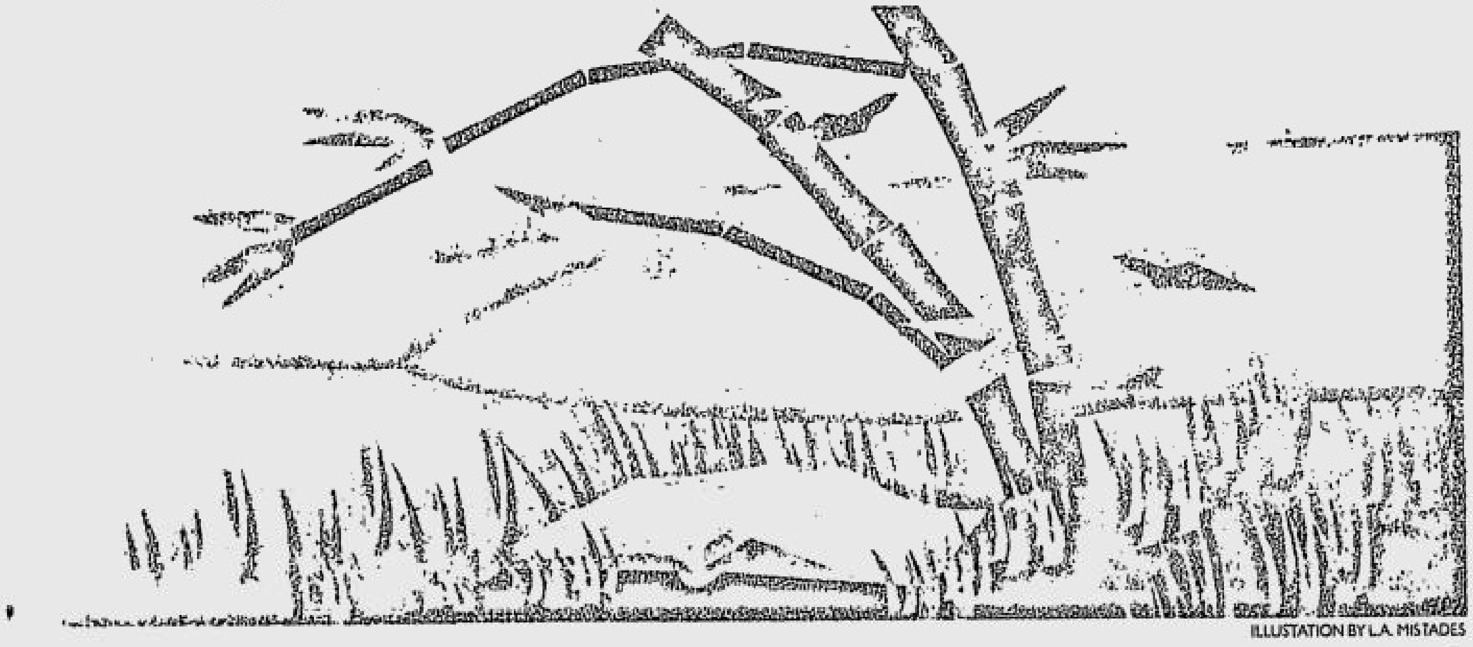
ILLUSTRATION BY L.A. MISTADES

I spend the afternoon reading about Edna St. Vincent Millay and taking a snooze while lying on a mat under the shade of bamboo trees

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

IT doesn't get any better than this. I am writing outside the guesthouse of retired activist Marivi Dizon on a one-hectare island in Lake Lumot, Cavinti, Laguna. The waters on the western side of this island are the equivalent of a main thoroughfare. It is Lumot's Edsa. Coming or going, the bancas have to pass through it.

Three generations of dogs live here on the island with two *katiwala*. The alliterative names of the dogs are Pia, Poopee and Panda. The last two are very protective of Marivi, who likes to keep things in order. They jump at me through the open windows as I approach the main door of the octagonal cottage.

The house is so designed that there are alternating wooden jalousies and open spaces so it's cool anytime of the day. But I prefer it outdoors. Feminist communications activist Anna Leah Sarabia, Marivi's partner and who describes herself as "always caught in new causes but who needs to take it easy," has laid out a pretty garden with many young trees. She had rocks and pebbles brought in from neighboring islets and arranged them to form a *dap-ay*.

Away from that busy part of the island, I swim for about half an hour near the fishpen with a slippery, moss-covered rope serving as my lifeline. Then I walk, all dripping and wet, to the sunset and sunrise viewing areas—groups of stone for sitting and watching these natural phenomena. Or one can just listen to the water rippling and watch it blown by the breeze in one direction.

I have placed a folding table on a bed of rocks in the makeshift gazebo. Anna had the five sides screened using old fishing nets. She used the same material for the roof, so I am toasting very well.

Lumot is certainly quieter than Boracay, except for the occasional roar of unregulated jet skis from a neighboring resort. Jet skis have no place in a watershed lake because they create ripples that erode the banks of the islands, unlike in Subic or Boracay where the ripples flow out to the sea. These jet skiers rush helter-skelter and do not observe waterway courtesy. They whiz past the bancas that are left rocking unsteadily in the wake of the strong waves.

Windless afternoon

My sister Gigi sends a text message asking when I'm coming home. I tell her to text me only when there is an emergency. I feel sorry for her with her infected big toe and being left by the womenfolk of the family so she has to feed my brothers.

It's a windless but sunny morning. I am up at 6 a.m, sipping a mug of green tea and watching the horizon. The moon is still up, and I see a white plane flying past it. The first streaks of sunlight fall on red and yellow walls of Porta Verde resort from across us, so the colors are more intense.

Last night I had my fill of listening to arias and movie themes while I gazed at the moon and the silvery glow it cast on the water. The wind was up so I wrapped my batik sarong around my shoulders. I showered after our dinner of fried *tilapia* caught from Marivi's fish cage and a salad of tomatoes, onions, sliced green mangoes, red eggs and *wansoy*. I took the salad without the *patis* dressing. I was in bed by 10 p.m.

Breakfast talk centers on another island visitor, a businesswoman undergoing depression in the wake of her breast cancer and menopause. She has a 10-year-old daughter, and one subject of her constant brooding is what will happen to the girl if her health takes a turn for the worse.

Her husband, who listens quietly to our excited, spoken bubbles of thought, is so supportive, the type who would love nothing

GRIEF/ E4

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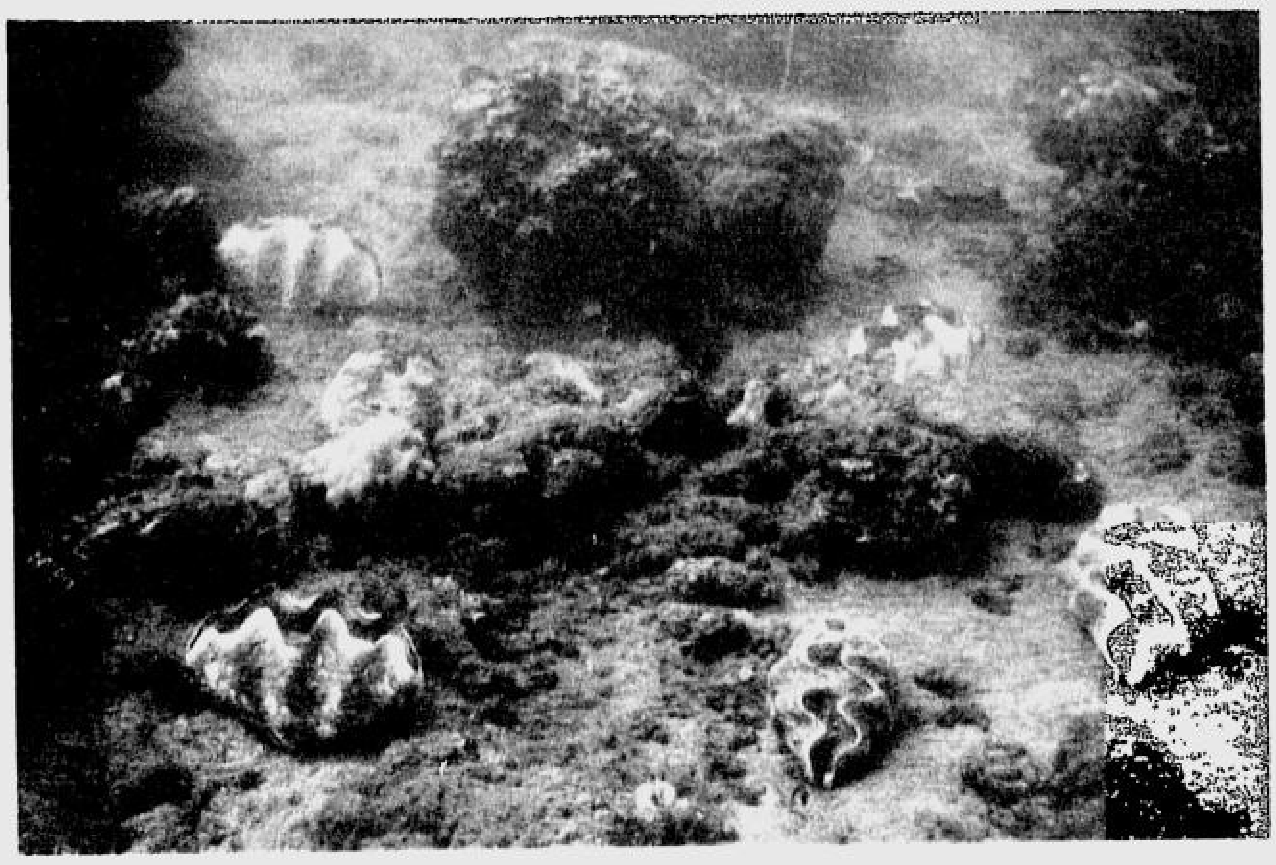
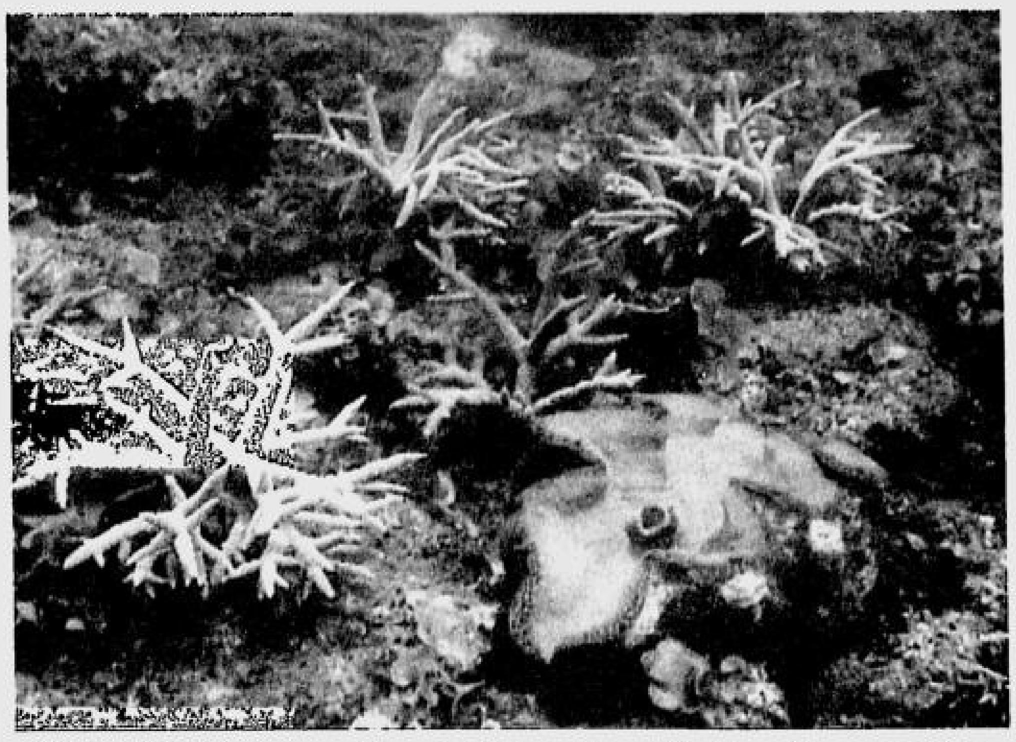




A **"RELOCATED"** giant clam and transplanted branching corals enhance the scenery at the Hundred Islands National Park (above); giant clams at a Pew restoration site in Infanta, Quezon (left)

Underwater garden needs rescue

By Michelle Reyes
Contributor

CORAL reefs are sometimes called underwater gardens. They are colorful, they grow nicely and are home to many interesting creatures. But the similarity ends there.

Corals are animals, not plants, and coral reefs are complex ecosystems, not a random collection of organisms that can be readily rearranged.

While flowers are easily replaced, corals are not. They are sensitive to a wide range of factors and can be stressed by temperature changes, fluctuating water salinity and pollution, among others.

By now, many people know that coral reefs are declining in most parts of the world, the Philippines included. What to do? Can anything be done to stop or even reverse coral reef degradation?

Restoration project

Dr. Edgardo Gomez of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute really wanted to know. So he set up a coral reef restoration project under the Pew Fellows in Marine Conservation program to try and find out.

He learned that not all damaged coral reefs can be restored. Ten mini restoration sites from Anda, Pangasinan in the north to Samal Island, Davao in the south had been established in the Philippines to help determine which reefs can be salvaged, why and how.

The sites were chosen mainly because of existing management system or the potential to start one, or because of marine reserves that needed rehabilitation and had potential for community-managed fishing. Other criteria for selection were clear water, good light, and normal salinity and water temperature. Abundant and diverse coral species in nearby reefs were necessary to serve as "donors" for coral transplants.

Previous efforts

Gomez had already been involved in previous efforts at transplanting corals and endangered giant clams (*Tridacna species*), and in developing practical techniques for such activities.

His Pew project set out to use similar methods in damaged sites to enhance biodiversity and productivity as well as to improve their aesthetic appeal. Many corals reproduce asexually by fragmentation.

Transplantation involves collecting naturally occurring fragments or cutting tiny pieces from existing large colonies. The fragments are then brought to the rehabilitation sites and secured underwater with ordinary cement.

In the case of giant clams, cultures were brought from the clam nursery in Bolinao, Pangasinan to transplantation sites, sometimes involving travel of up to 15 hours by land, sea and air. The animals, once settled in their new homes, were monitored regularly for progress and survival.

Communities as stewards

The goal in both coral and clam transplantation initiatives is to transfer stewardship of restored sites to local communities once the project takes off.

To prepare for that event, the project team conducted sessions to raise the environmental and conservation consciousness of coastal inhabitants and visitors. Giant clam nursery training was given to non-government organizations and local community leaders. Brochures, flyers and posters on clam conservation were produced.

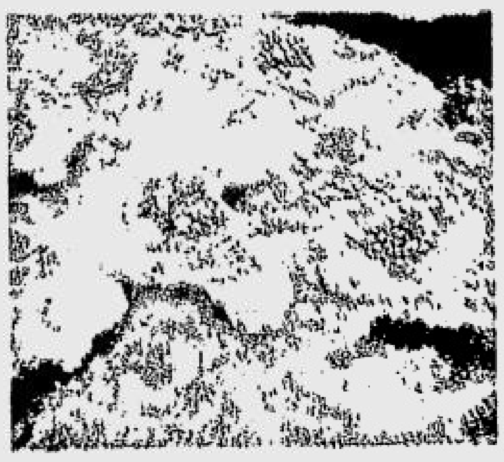
The response was positive. Officials, led by the Infanta town mayor, teachers and regular citizens in Alabat Island, Quezon, one of the transplantation sites, observed the actual deployment of transplants.

With corals, the need to educate people is even more pressing. One high school teacher asked to be shown a coral fragment because she had no idea how coral looked. Her reaction upon seeing it is similar to many Filipinos: "*Akala ko bato lang yan.*"

No instant gratification

That kind of reaction is just one of the challenges the project has to overcome. The study would not show instant results and might even take years before its effects could be felt. Some local politicians did not understand what the initiative was all about.

HARD work pays off: branching corals thriving several months after transplantation at the Hundred Island National Park



CORAL transplant "terraces" in Dalulac, Zambales

The survival rate of coral fragments averages 50 percent, depending on the site. But in certain places, it has been as high as 80 percent to the delight of those involved.

Mayor Jessu Edora of Masinloc, Zambales had already expressed the hope that the municipality's Pew demonstration site should be replicated throughout Masinloc Bay. But, at any rate, the project has already helped raise awareness of the need for the conservation of threatened species like the giant clams and corals. So far, lack of resources has prevented the immediate expansion of the project to the other towns, but plans are being developed to overcome this problem.

One site in Alabat Island, Quezon is a result of a painstakingly typewritten letter in classic Tagalog from the head of a local environment group who looked for a "savior" for Lamon Bay.

Given this hopeful sign, while Dr. Gomez does not expect that the Pew project can "save" entire ecosystems, he thinks a step in the right direction has certainly been made already.

> Although corals may look like plants, they are actually microscopic animals and not as easily replaceable

LACK of a proper diving suit and fins doesn't stop a Davaoeño from helping in the Pew transplantation activities.

DR. Edgardo Gomez, Pew project leader, confer with local officials in Masinloc, Zambales

THE PHOTO that inspired a project: corals naturally recruited into a live giant clam

A CORAL transplant creating a new base for itself by secreting its natural "cement"

TRANSPLANTED giant clams in Alabat, Quezon show off their natural color variations.

Sleep paralysis and astral projection

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

I AM reproducing the letter of Eileen R. Santos of Mandaluyong City who has been experiencing "sleep paralysis" with my comments. This is also in reply to others who have asked the same question.

Ms Santos has done excellent research on sleep paralysis which is worth sharing.

"I want to share my experience, as well as seek your guidance. For several years now, I've been experiencing the so-called 'sleep paralysis'. I have been completely unaware of this sleep 'disorder' until my curiosity made me do some research on the Internet. According to my research, sleep paralysis (SP) is possibly a hereditary disorder in which one experiences very frightening seconds or minutes of total body paralysis with little respiration and eye movement.

"A victim... feels awake, but he cannot move or speak. (Other) common symptoms include being choked or suffocated, hearing strange noises like footsteps and voices, seeing beings or dark shadows, and feeling (the presence) of someone in the room. Although often these symptoms (lead) the victim to believe in ghosts, mis-transmission of neural signals in the brain causes sleep paralysis.

Brain signals

"When a person sleeps, his brain signals to inhibit any muscle contraction. If he comes into consciousness before the brain sends signals to activate muscle contraction, he cannot move his body and, consequently, becomes 'paralyzed.'"

There is really a pathological or medical condition causing sleep paralysis. However, I believe this is different. I have not heard of any ill effects resulting from the condition, except fear and tiredness upon return of mobility.

As you yourself pointed out, the medical condition is called narcolepsy, "a neurological condition in which the sufferer involuntarily falls asleep, with no warning, at any time of the day, even while performing an activity."

But what you have experienced is definitely not of this type. In your case, and those of many others, you don't "fall asleep and become paralyzed," as in narcolepsy. You wake up from sleep and can't move.

Out-of-body experience

This is entirely different. A great majority of such experiences are related more to astral projection or out-of-body experience (OOBE) rather than a medical disorder.

During sleep paralysis, a person may try to cry out or fight the presence they believe is responsible for causing them to be paralyzed. This has never helped me, nor anyone else I've heard of, but somehow we have the innate feeling that we must 'fight' this.

Usually, movement returns slowly within a minute or so. These hallucinations are called 'hypnogogic' and 'hypnopompic'. They occur at the onset of sleep and just before waking, the period we call the 'twilight stages' of sleep. They can be auditory, visual, tactile and proprioceptive. A proprioceptor is a sensory receptor found mainly in the joints, muscle, tendons, and inner ear that detects motion and can also detect the position of a limb by responding to internal stimuli.

This means, when a person feels smashed into the bed or that a creature is sitting on his chest it can really (seem like a) hallucination. Because of proprioceptors, we can feel as though we are falling through the bed, even though we actually are...quite stationary.

Undetected

The problem in understanding the real nature of "sleep paralysis" is that medical science has no knowledge of the "astral body" and its nature. No medical instrument has ever detected its presence and therefore, to medical doctors, they tend to explain everything in terms of their own perspective or paradigm. This is understandable.

However, there is a whole body of literature that shows ample evidence of the astral body that can detach from the physical body in sleep or even when fully awake. Once we acknowledge the existence of this subtle body, then the phenomenon of the so-called sleep paralysis becomes understandable.

When the astral body leaves the physical body, the person cannot move because his consciousness goes with it. It is like the driver who gets out of his vehicle and therefore cannot drive it. The vehicle cannot move by itself.

Natural event

Astral projection is a natural event or state and should not be considered a disorder or a pathological condition. Almost everyone goes out of his body while asleep and travels. Most of the time however this happens without "awakening" in the astral world so we may not realize what has really happened when we wake up. That's when the trouble begins.

We become frightened because we can't move. We try to return to our body but we cannot because, the more we struggle, the more there will be a misalignment in the vibrations between the astral and physical body.

When a person feels like he is flying or being smashed, it is because his astral body is really flying while his physical body remains in bed. That's why doctors call this "hallucination." Actually it is not.

When the physical body gets jolted into waking consciousness and can already move, that's the exact moment the astral body returns to the physical body. One experiences this as a jolt or *naudlot* in Tagalog. It's all very simple and logical, if one accepts and understands the astral body and its capabilities.

Next week: Sleep paralysis and alien abduction.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati. Call 8107245 or 8926806. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7-8 p.m., every Sunday.

Gift-giving for PGH patients

THE PHI Kappa Mu fraternity will hold its annual gift-giving and variety show, "Only the PHInest", 7 p.m., Dec. 15, at the Philippine General Hospital quadrangle.

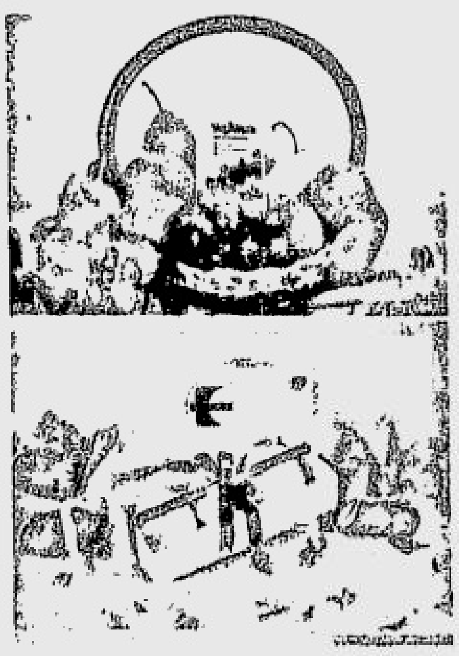
Founded in 1933, the fraternity is a duly-recognized organization of the University of the Philippines Manila College of Medicine.

The show is meant to bring cheer to charity patients and their families as well as PGH employees, including doctors and medical students, who will spend the holidays in the hospital.

Featured artists include Giselle Sanchez, stand-up comedian Kikiam, Manila city councilor Robert Ortega, and upcoming OPM band Bridge.

Gift packs for patients will include food, toiletries and other items. Additional donations are welcome.

Call (0916)3371563 or 4981497.



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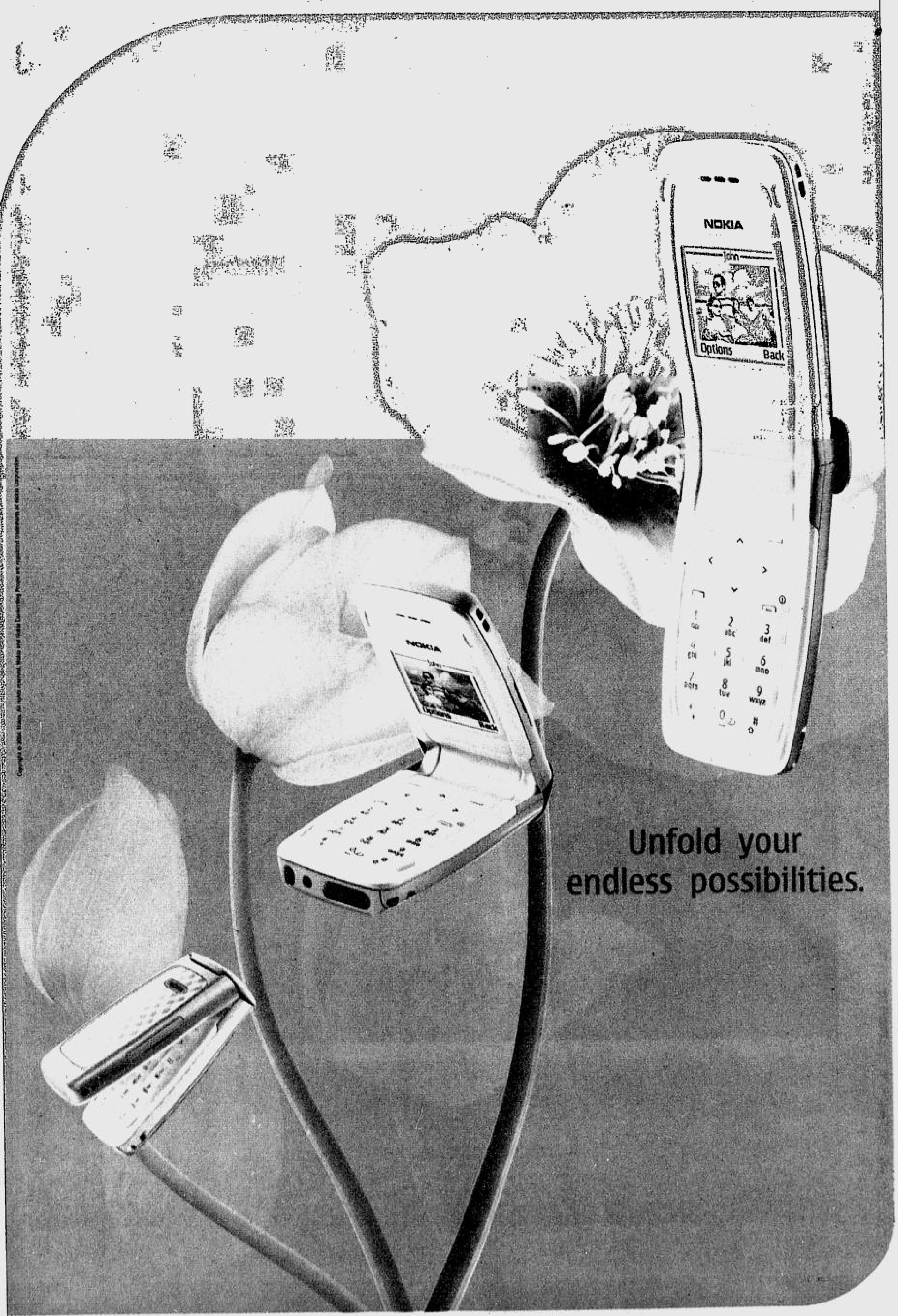

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Magazine on cancer now off the press

"HEADLINE on Headwear," "Yes, Virginia, There Is Sex (During) After Cancer," and "PET Scan, A Man's (and Woman's) Best Friend" are just three of the articles that make up the maiden issue of The Big C, the country's first magazine to deal exclusively with cancer. It is now off the press.

Envisioned by breast-cancer survivor Suzette Romero Andrews as a form of thanksgiving, The Big C aims to echo the hopes and determination of cancer patients to survive, present the realities of living with and battling the disease, and provide illuminating information about cancer cure and research advances.

The Core Group Publishing Inc., The Big C publisher, is a small group of professionals who, individually, had a run-in with cancer either as patient, caregiver or medical practitioner. Andrews, one of the group's founding members, thought of putting up a magazine as a way of contributing to cancer awareness.

Serving as medical adviser for the magazine is Andrews' doctor, Dr. Francisco Vicente F. Lopez, a medical oncologist and hematologist who specializes in bone-marrow transplant. Dr. Lopez shares a personal motivation with Andrews—years earlier, he lost his father to cancer. The doctor, in turn, introduced to the group Ferdie Figueroa, father of a recipient of bone-marrow transplant; and Achilles Mina, the husband of a patient diagnosed with acute leukemia.

The helping started in earnest in November when The Big C debuted with Lydia Paredes, a cancer survivor, and husband, popular songwriter Jim Paredes.

Each issue of the magazine contains medical stories, feature stories and column pieces. The medical stories highlight the coordinated multidisciplinary approach to cancer diagnosis and treatment. The column pieces advise, explain or entertain and involve various topics on fashion, lifestyle and even book and music reviews that bear on life with cancer. Forming the bulk of the magazine are the feature stories—real-life drama, or trials and triumphs fleshed out by the voices of patients, survivors, caregivers and doctors.

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Grief and solace in Cavinti

From page E1

more than to take his wife dancing. She says she can only float on the dance floor and on water, so I tell her she should take up a physical activity apart from her structured office duties and pared-down workload—something on the artistic side, something she had long put off doing, like fixing the photo albums, labeling the photos, etc. Or she can even start a journal, one page a day, to release all her negative thoughts.

Our convalescing friend has quit going to a psychiatrist who, she says, only gives her sedatives or pills to put her to sleep. She has turned to a priest trained as a psychotherapist who has taught her meditation, relaxation and visualization techniques. But again she confesses to not being disciplined enough to practice them every day.

Anna calls her an obsessive-compulsive disorder case, a control freak who cannot totally give up the office routine, even temporarily.

Epidemic among women

I share my own experience of depression over the years, including my most severe bout that landed me for 20 days at Medical City in 1997. Anna tells about how a few years ago she was moving towards clinical depression after her own breakup with an ex and at the same time she was also in the process of helping Marivi cope with grief over the death of her previous partner.

Much, much later after this weekend, Anna e-mails me a letter about "this thing about depression seem(ing) almost like an epidemic among menopausal/perimenopausal women." She calls it her "unscientific observations. I know that the emotional and spiritual causes are varied, but may have something to do with being disillusioned and/or losing ideals. If menopause is the reverse of puberty, and it is during puberty that we form our ideals and standards, how can depression be not normal? Maybe we have to look at it from a different perspective, more like something to deal with and befriend—rather than avoid—when it comes into our lives."

She continues, "I wonder if the energies of our minds in a depressive state need to be tapped in a way that we haven't really imagined. I wonder if one can compare it to the unexplored depths of the sea that many of us fear. Do you remember the movie 'The Piano' where she was drowning and she was saying something about going down? Something like a half-nightmare, something like a mysterious dream. Maybe being normal and sociable isn't all there is to life. Maybe being thin and bubbly and good-looking isn't all there is to beauty. Who knows? Some of the things people in depression feel are actually signals of life beyond this earth as we know it."

Meanwhile, my own mood swings have stabilized. I spend the afternoon reading more pages about Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay's life while lying on a mat laid on the sloping ground under the shade of a clump of bamboo trees singing their relaxing song. I put a lot of sunblock lotion so I will not burn as the sun climbs higher. I take a snooze and cover my face with a red hat, the very same one journalist Cynthia Alberto Diaz gave me last Christmas.

When I wake up, I see a red ant in the air. For a moment, I imagine it is flying. But no, it is climbing this very fine filament, hardly visible unless you squint at it against the light. Then you see the thin thread it is using to climb to build an ants' nest on the roof of the cottage.

Afterwards, another swim in the lake. Anna yells that I shouldn't go too far. But I feel safe in the lukewarm dark blue water. Later I learn from the *katiwala* that some portions of the lake have a depth of 20 coconut trees piled one on top of another.

The smallest nibble of fear bites my skin. I am not about to go down over some long-ago heartbreak. And I head for the warmth indoors, the simple fare we have each meal and the comforting company of women and a singularly sympathetic man.

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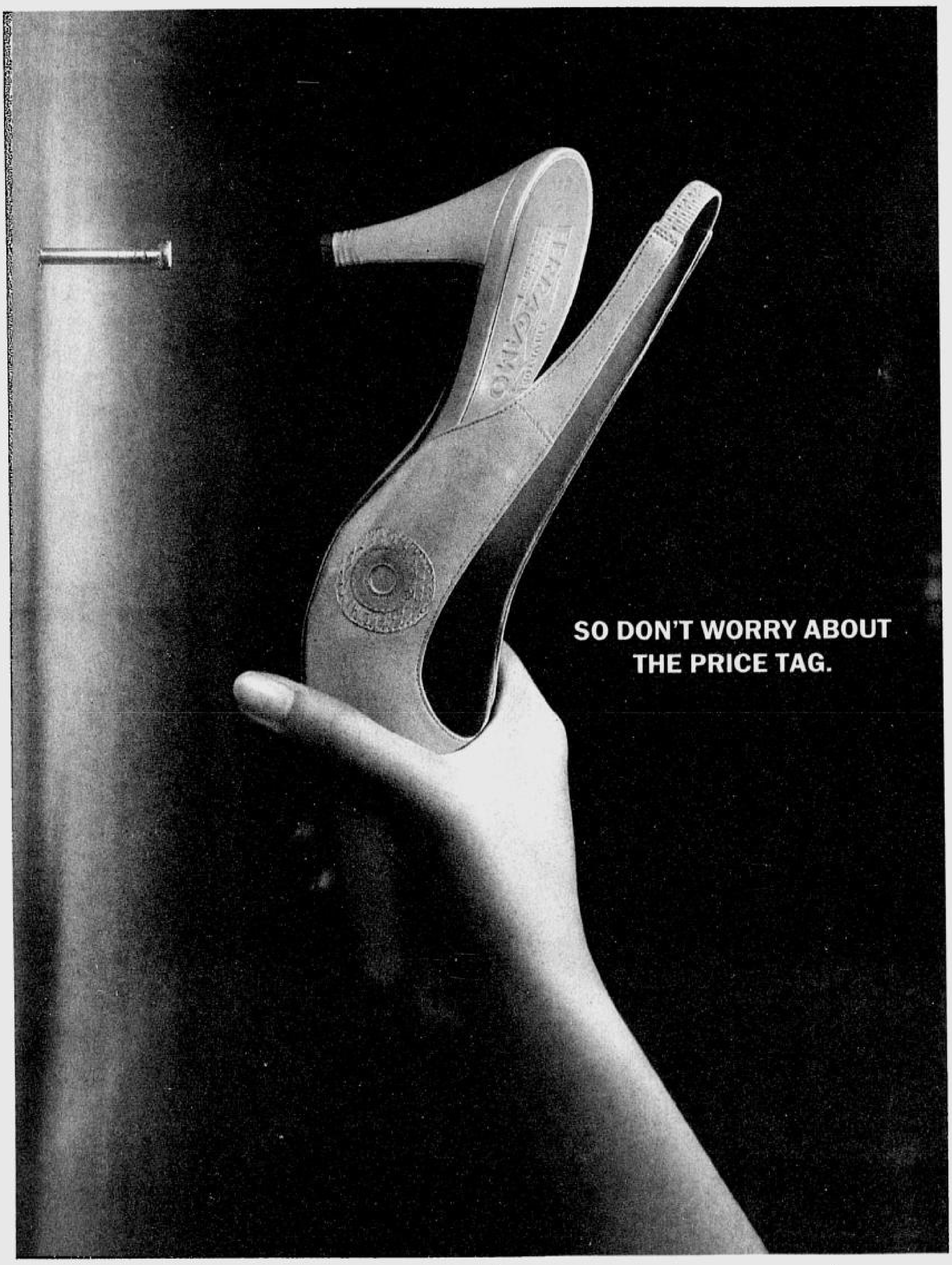

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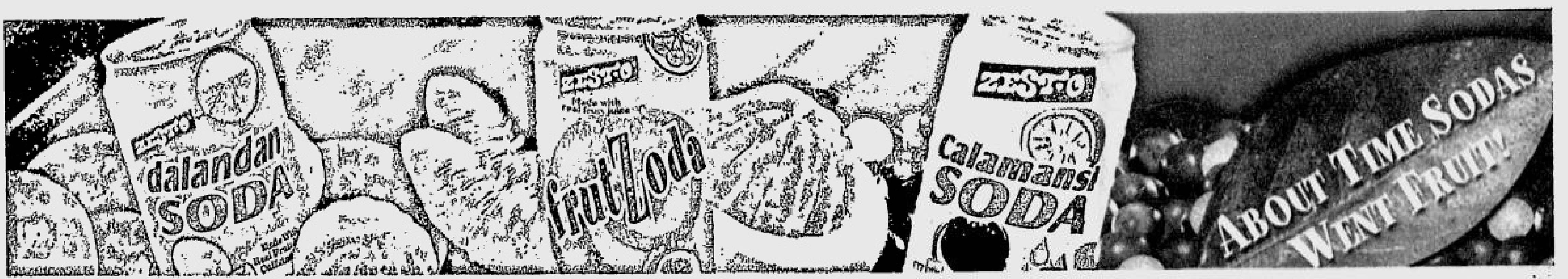
3. Text VISA followed by your name on card,issuing bank,last 4 digits of account number,amount of transaction,date of transaction,time of transaction on transaction slip (No space after each comma. Amounts ₱1000 and up should be written without a comma or a peso sign). Send to 2989 for Smart and Globe. **Ex: VISA MENNIE SO,AIG,1234,1000.25,102404,1808**

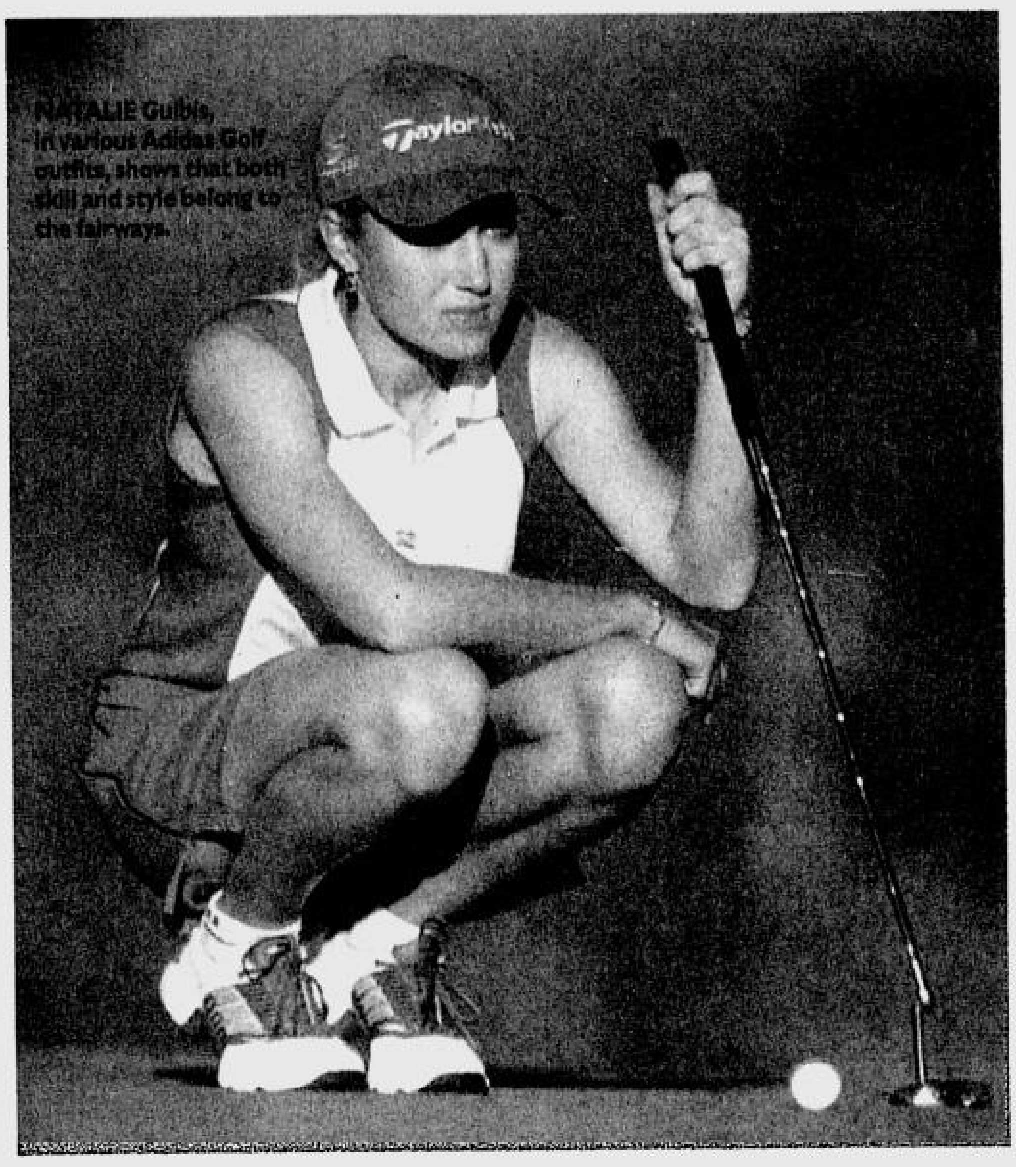
Bi-monthly draws start on November 11, 2004.

VISA
All it takes.



LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



NATALIE Gulbis, in various Adidas Golf outfits, shows that both skill and style belong to the fairways.

Golf glam

NATALIE Gulbis, one of Adidas Golf's leading endorsers, proves that being a fine athlete does not necessarily mean looking unglamorous.

The 21-year-old is out to prove that a young, beautiful woman is as capable of impressive achievements in golf as anybody else.

Gulbis is among an elite circle of young fast-rising golf standouts endorsing Adidas Golf. The other members of this circle are Sergio Garcia of Spain, and Ian Poulter and Justin Rose of England.

Gulbis, who first stepped into the fairways in Sacramento at age 4 with her father John, won her first tournament when she was 7. She broke par by age 10 and won the California Junior Girls a year later while also competing in gymnastics and diving.

At 14, Gulbis became the youngest ever winner of the California Women's Amateur Championship.

As a student at the University of Arizona, she won four college events and earned first team All-America honors. She finished second in the 2002 Rookie of the Year points standings.

Gulbis continues to shine not just in her chosen sport but also to set the trend in golfing fashion with Adidas Golf.

Adidas Golf is available at TaylorMade-Adidas Golf shops, 3/F, Makati Golf Club and City Golf Driving Range; Golf Depot at Alabang Town Center; Bravo Golf at Park Square and Alabang Town Center; and Adidas concept stores in Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Rockwell, SM Megamall and Westin Philippine Plaza.

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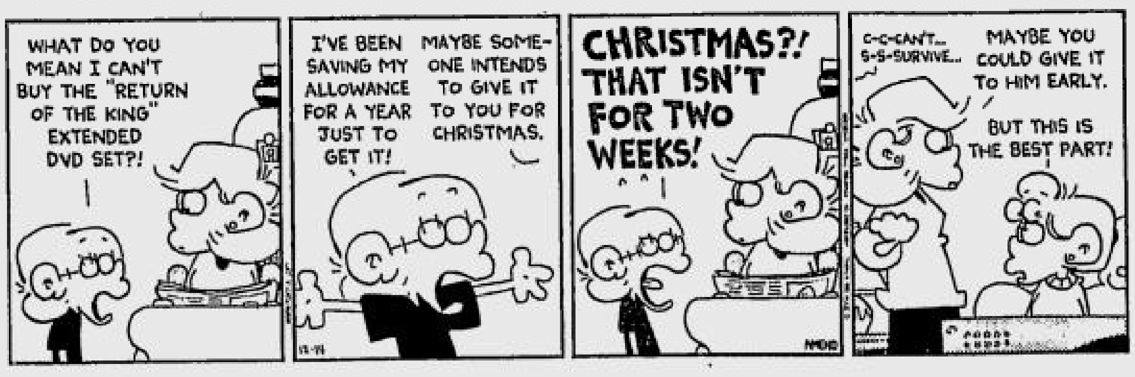
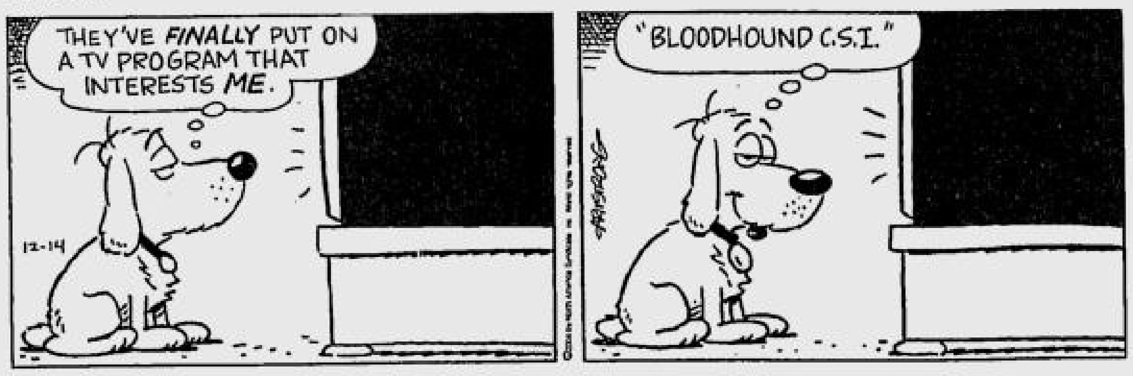
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT DO YOU MEAN I CAN'T BUY THE "RETURN OF THE KING" EXTENDED DVD SET?!
I'VE BEEN SAVING MY ALLOWANCE FOR A YEAR JUST TO GET IT!
MAYBE SOMEONE INTENDS TO GIVE IT TO YOU FOR CHRISTMAS.
CHRISTMAS?! THAT ISN'T FOR TWO WEEKS!
C-C-CAN'T... S-S-SURVIVE...
MAYBE YOU COULD GIVE IT TO HIM EARLY.
BUT THIS IS THE BEST PART!

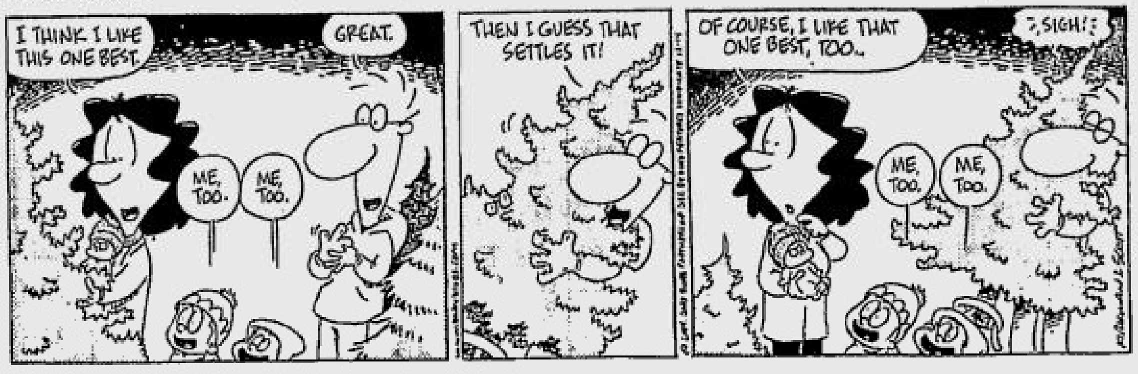
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THEY'VE FINALLY PUT ON A TV PROGRAM THAT INTERESTS ME.
12-14
"BLOODHOUND C.S.I."

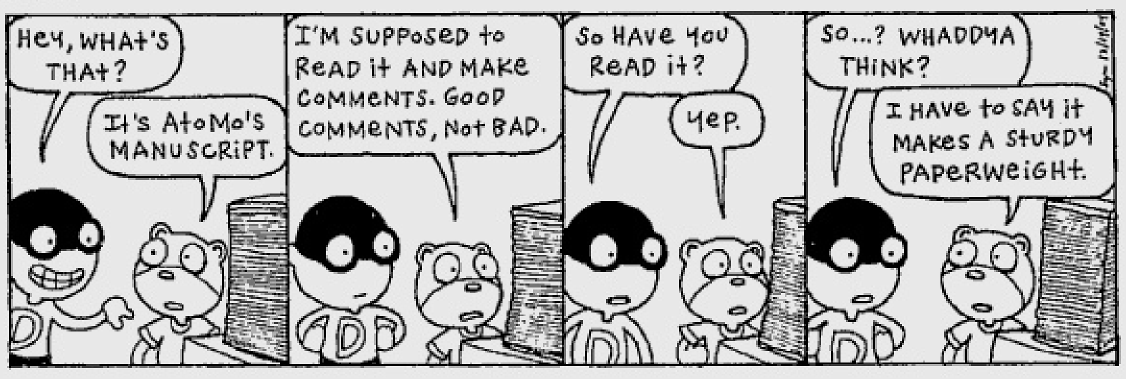
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I THINK I LIKE THIS ONE BEST.
GREAT.
ME, TOO.
ME, TOO.
THEN I GUESS THAT SETTLES IT!
OF COURSE, I LIKE THAT ONE BEST, TOO...
SIGH!
ME, TOO.
ME, TOO.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WHAT'S THAT?
It's AtoMo's MANUSCRIPT.
I'M SUPPOSED to ReAD it AND MAKE COMMENTS. GOOD COMMENTS, Not BAD.
So HAVE you ReAD it?
yep.
So...? WHADDYA THINK?
I HAVE to SAY it MAKES A StURDY PAPERWEIGHT.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are bold and daring. Not only that, you're original. You can be quite comfortable in the limelight, if you're feeling good. By contrast, you're very private at times. Sometimes you're tempted to be outrageous because the bizarre attracts you. A very social year awaits you. It's an excellent year for partnerships. **Birthdate of:** Charlie Rich, musician; Michael Owen, soccer player; Patty Duke, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your appreciation of beauty and your sense of wonder are beautifully heightened. Make the most of this by visiting galleries, art shows, bookstores, parks and beautiful places. Enjoy!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel very sympathetic toward someone , especially someone in need. Similarly, if you are in dire straits, others will feel sympathetic to you. It's a give-and-take thing.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Discussions with partners and close friends are very close and tender today. You truly appreciate where others are coming from and what they're dealing with. And they appreciate you and your world.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Co-workers are surprisingly supportive today. This might be because you are especially supportive of them, in turn.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your creative vibes are sizzling! Your imagination and your ability to make an artistic input to whatever you're doing are excellent today. Go forth and be creative!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You can be a great source of comfort and solace to a family member today. Someone needs your help. (Quite possibly, someone will help you!)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your ability to visualize things and use your imagination is excellent today. Your intuitive skills are also highly tuned. Trust your gut reaction to things.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're tempted to spend money on beautiful things today. You can't help yourself. Do whatever you think you can afford to get away with because you adore beautiful things right now.

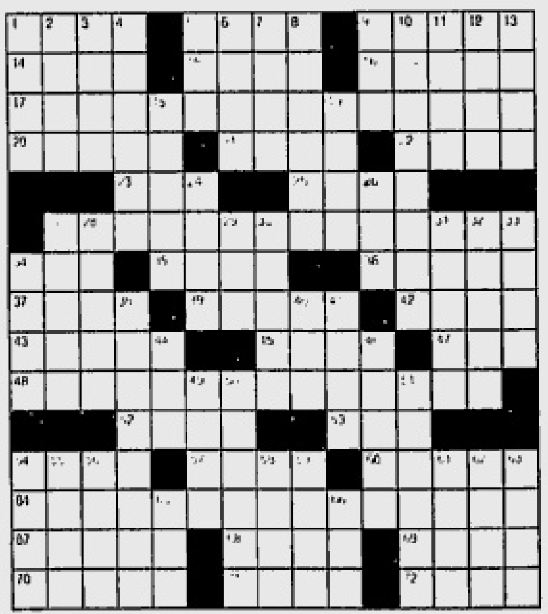
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your mind is sharp, and your perceptions are excellent today. You understand immediately what others want. Because of this, you're able to talk to people with sympathy and understanding.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You feel quite psychic today. It's as if messages come to you in the air. You almost know what others are thinking and feeling. (It's kind of spooky.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might figure out a way to join forces with others to do charitable work or to help those who are less fortunate than you are. You genuinely want to help those who are needy.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): People are impressed with you today. You appear to be in control of your life in a glamorous, talented way—even if you don't think so. Just accept this.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
12/14/04

ACROSS
1 Brad of "Troy"
5 Vigoda and Burrows
9 Entertain
14 Katz of "Hocus Pocus"
15 Uncivil
16 Medicated
17 Nabbed in the act
20 Greek letter
21 Slope by a loch
22 Dinghy movers
23 Rock composer Brian
25 Waste allowance
27 Punish to the max
34 Lamb's mom
35 Nastase of tennis
36 Indy winner Tom
37 Arm or leg
39 Comic David
42 Dead Sea kingdom
43 Work dough
45 Stumble
47 Joe and his comrades?
48 Pack off to Sing Sing
52 Rude person
53 Greek letter
54 Aretha's style
57 Final position
60 Fabric
64 Guarantee no parole
67 Choice of conjunctions
68 Director Wertmuller
69 Pitfall
70 Typeface designer
71 Winter ride
72 Vendor's aim

DOWN
1 Somewhat, in music
2 Islamic scholar
3 Faithful
4 Pal of Pooh
5 Gallery collection
6 Commuter's town, casually
7 German river
8 Put to sleep
9 Clare of "Bleak House"
10 Plainsong feature
11 Turkey-label letters
12 Oracle
13 Roush and Hall
18 Capital of Vietnam
19 Alpert or Caen
24 Hooters
26 Dawn goddess
27 Twisted thread
28 Macho guys
29 Gratuity
30 Moorland
31 Move with anchor ropes
32 To have: Fr.
33 Highland caps
34 Part of BPOE
38 Enmity
40 Dr. of rap
41 Ireland
44 Pair
46 Sales spiel
49 Actress Negri
50 Fishes using setlines
51 Male servants
54 Males only
55 Cry of distress
56 Pakistani language
58 Go yachting
59 Newcastle's river
61 Gumbo veggie
62 Bluish green
63 Surfeit of publicity
65 Ironic
66 Small amount

Monday's Puzzle Solved

P	L	A	I	D	■	T	E	L	E	X	■	H	O	P
H	E	N	N	A	■	A	L	I	V	E	■	O	U	R
D	A	I	S	Y	M	I	L	L	E	R	■	L	S	U
■	■	■	■	C	A	L	F	■	■	O	I	L	E	D
N	O	R	M	A	N	S	■	H	E	S	T	Y	L	E
A	M	O	U	R	S	■	H	A	V	I	S	H	■	■
T	A	S	T	E	■	W	I	V	E	S	■	U	H	N
T	H	E	E	■	G	I	V	E	N	■	K	N	E	E
Y	A	K	■	L	A	D	E	N	■	S	U	T	R	A
■	■	E	Y	E	L	E	T	■	M	A	D	E	U	P
A	G	N	O	M	E	N	■	R	E	T	U	R	N	S
S	U	N	U	P	■	■	I	O	N	I	■	■	■	■
T	I	L	■	I	R	I	S	M	U	R	D	O	C	H
O	L	D	■	R	E	C	A	P	■	I	N	U	R	E
R	E	Y	■	A	P	E	R	S	■	C	A	T	T	Y

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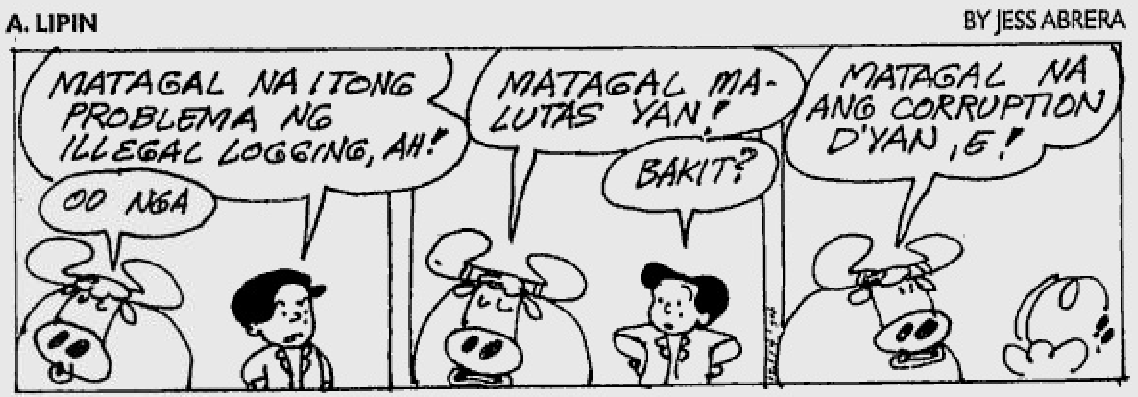
12/14/04

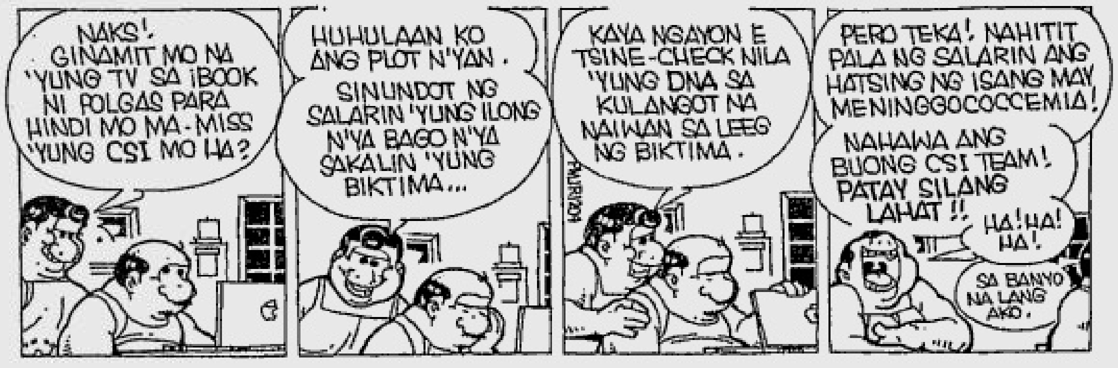
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MATAGAL NA ITONG PROBLEMA NG ILLEGAL LOGGING, AH!
OO NGA
MATAGAL MALUTAS YAN!
BAKIT?
MATAGAL NA ANG CORRUPTION D'YAN, E!

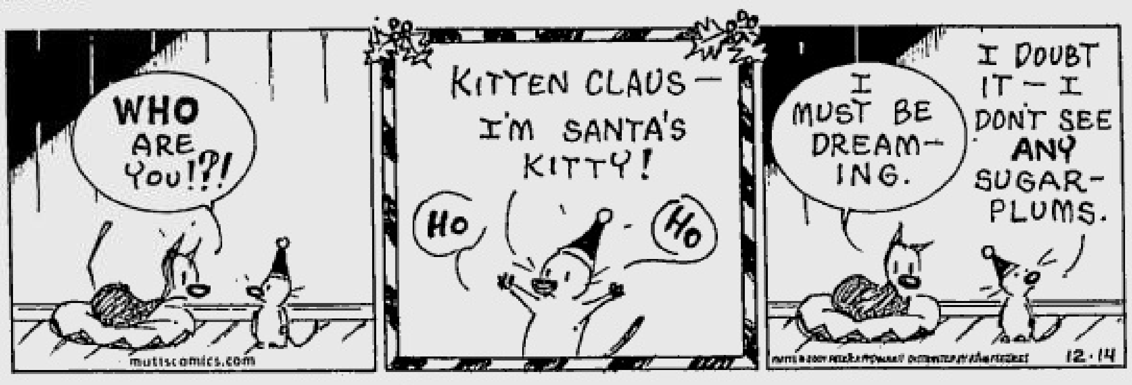
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAKS!. GINAMIT MO NA 'YUNG TV SA iBOOK NI POLGAS PARA HINDI MO MA-MISS 'YUNG CSI MO HA?
HUHULAAN KO ANG PLOT N'YAN.
SINUNDOT NG SALARIN 'YUNG ILONG N'YA BAGO N'YA SAKALIN 'YUNG BIKTIMA...
KAYA NGAYON E TSINE-CHECK NILA 'YUNG DNA SA KULANGOT NA NAIWAN SA LEEG NG BIKTIMA.
PERO TEKA!. NAHITIT PALA NG SALARIN ANG HATSING NG ISANG MAY MENINGGOCOCCEMIA!
NAHAWA ANG BUONG CSI TEAM! PATAY SILANG LAHAT!!
HA! HA! HA!
SA BANYO NA LANG AKO.

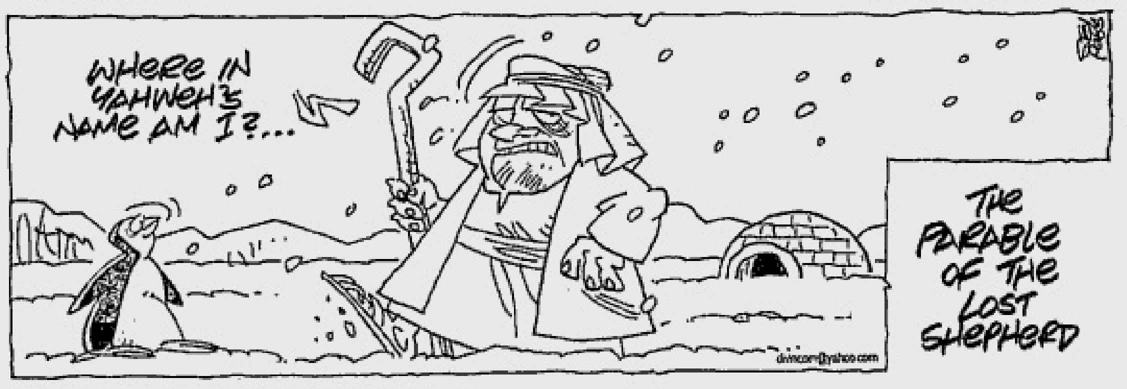
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHO ARE YOU!?!
mutts comics.com
KITTEN CLAUS — I'M SANTA'S KITTY!
HO
HO
I MUST BE DREAMING.
I DOUBT IT — I DON'T SEE ANY SUGARPLUMS.
12.14

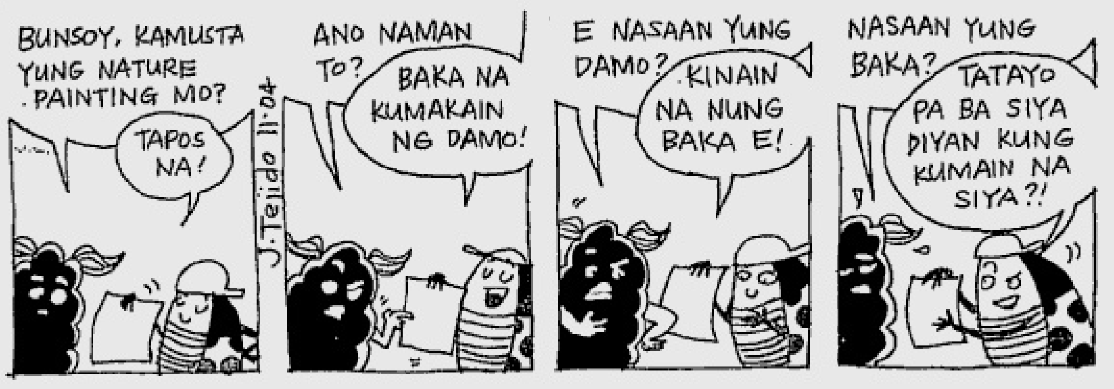
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHERE IN YAHWEH'S NAME AM I?...
THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEPHERD
divincom@yahoo.com

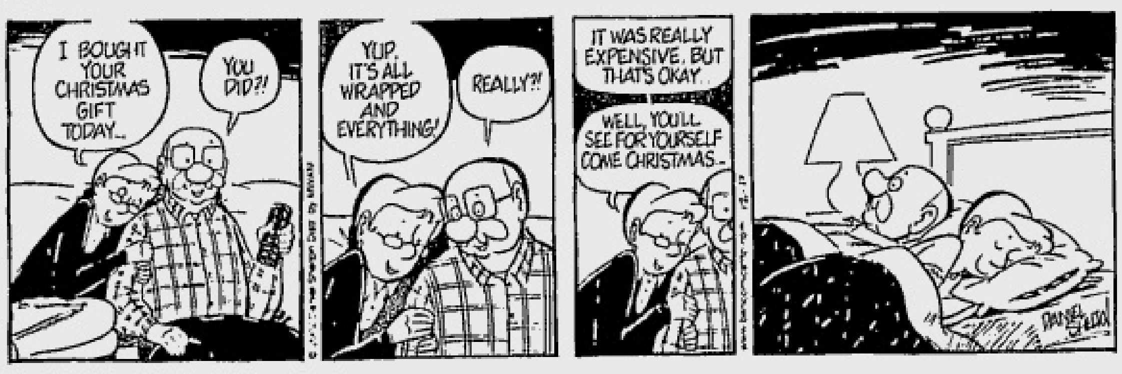
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY, KAMUSTA YUNG NATURE PAINTING MO?
TAPOS NA!
J. Tejido 11.04
ANO NAMAN TO?
BAKA NA KUMAKAIN NG DAMO!
E NASAAN YUNG DAMO?
KINAIN NA NUNG BAKA E!
NASAAN YUNG BAKA?
TATAYO PA BA SIYA DIYAN KUNG KUMAIN NA SIYA?!

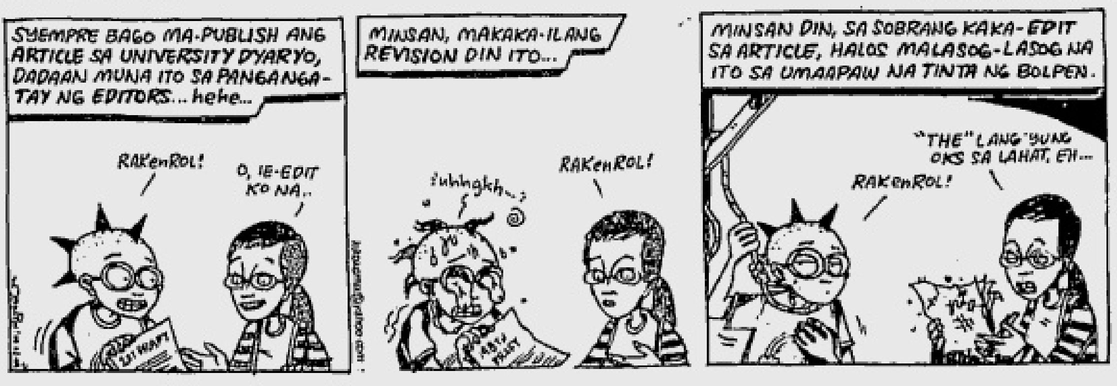
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I BOUGHT YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT TODAY...
YOU DID?!
YUP. IT'S ALL WRAPPED AND EVERYTHING!
REALLY?!
IT WAS REALLY EXPENSIVE, BUT THAT'S OKAY.
WELL, YOU'LL SEE FOR YOURSELF COME CHRISTMAS...
DANIEL SHELTON

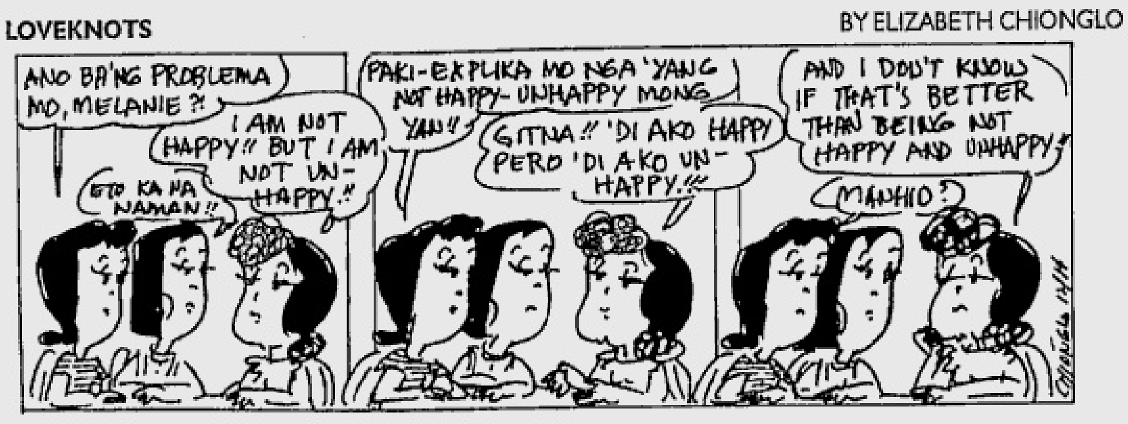
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SYEMPRE BAGO MA-PUBLISH ANG ARTICLE SA UNIVERSITY DYARYO, DADAAN MUNA ITO SA PANGANGATAY NG EDITORS... hehe...
RAKenROL!
O, IE-EDIT KO NA..
MINSAN, MAKAKA-ILANG REVISION DIN ITO...
!uhhgkh..?
RAKenROL!
MINSAN DIN, SA SOBRANG KAKA-EDIT SA ARTICLE, HALOS MALASOG-LASOG NA ITO SA UMAAPAW NA TINTA NG BOLPEN.
RAKenROL!
"THE" LANG 'YUNG OKS SA LAHAT, EH...

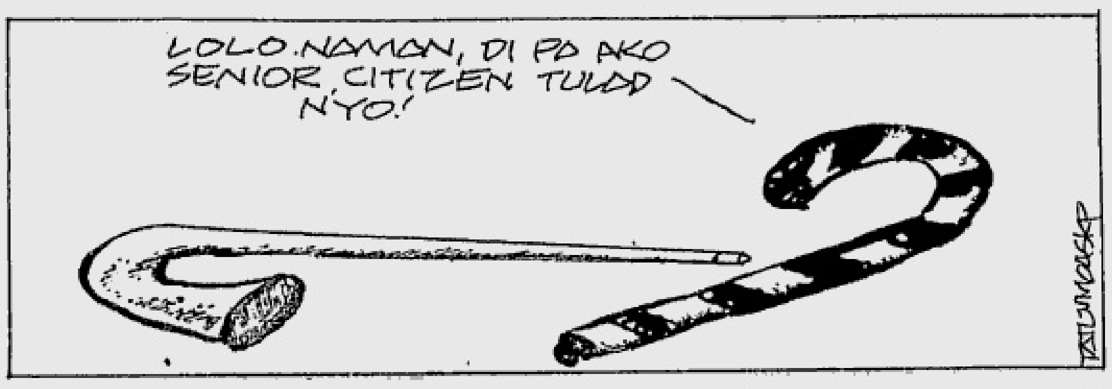
LOVEKNOTS

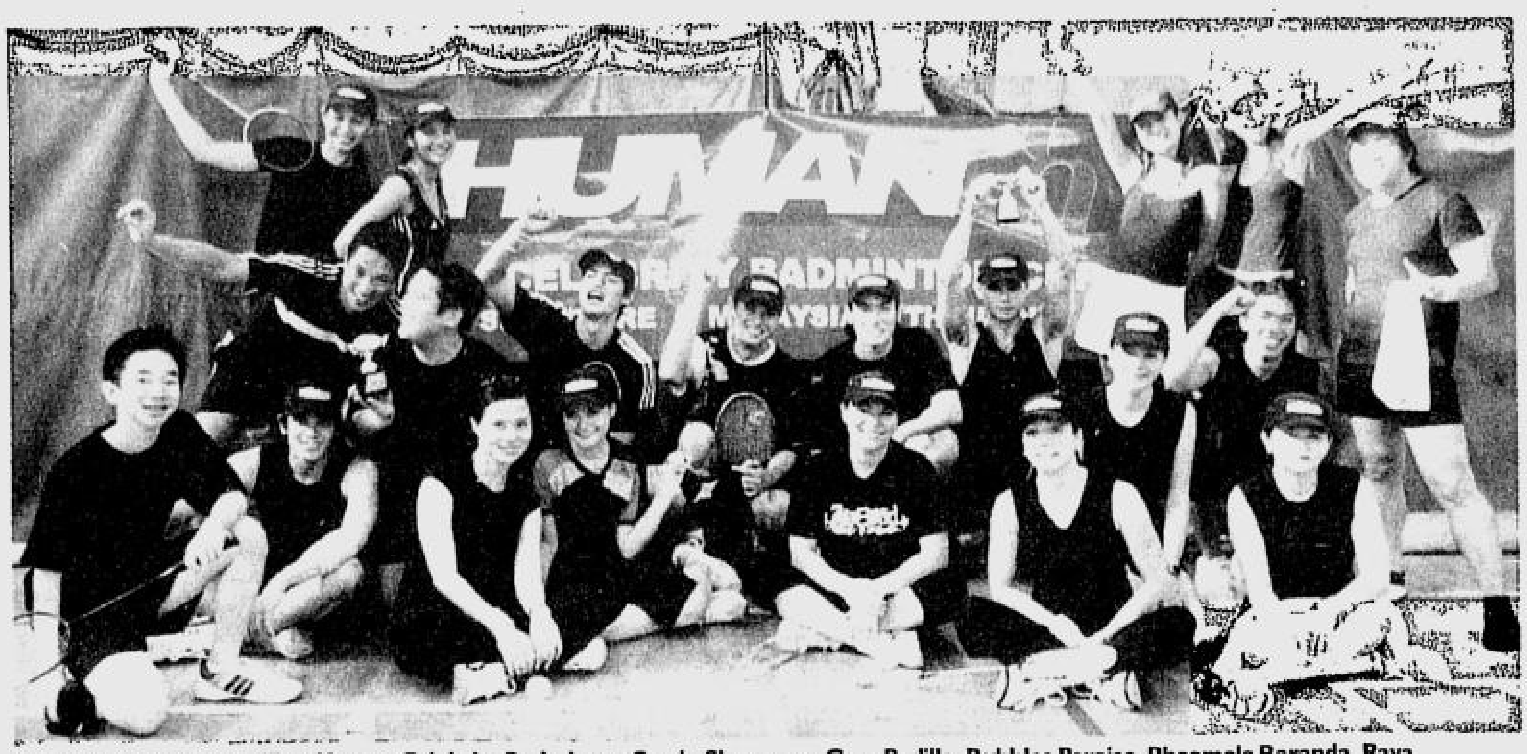
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANO BA'NG PROBLEMA MO, MELANIE?!
I AM NOT HAPPY!! BUT I AM NOT UNHAPPY.!!
ETO KA NA NAMAN!!
PAKI-EXPLIKA MO NGA 'YANG NOT HAPPY-UNHAPPY MONG YAN!!
GITNA!! 'DI AKO HAPPY PERO 'DI AKO UNHAPPY.!!
AND I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S BETTER THAN BEING NOT HAPPY AND UNHAPPY!
MANHID?
CHIONGLO 12/14

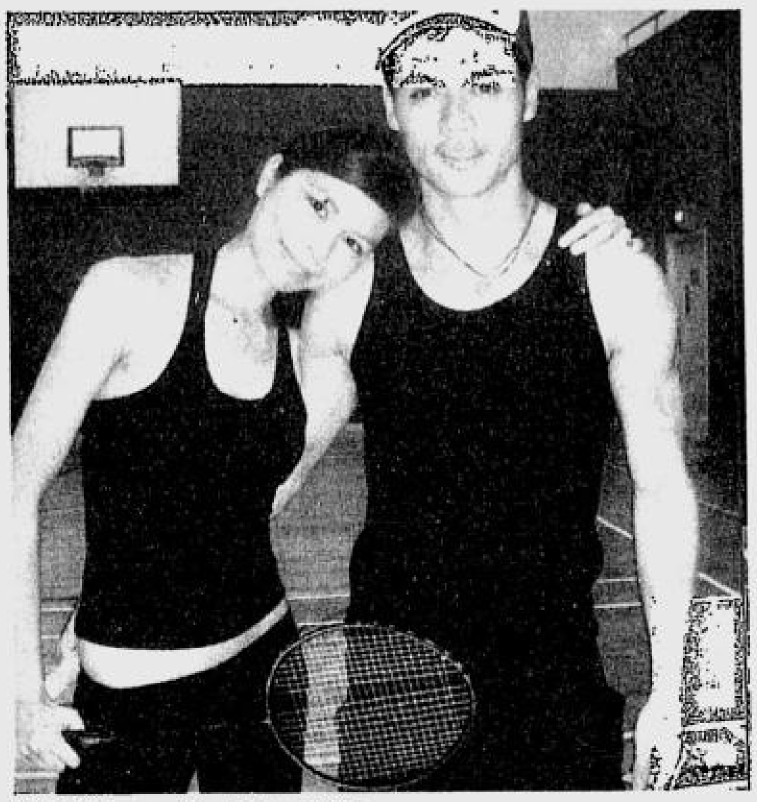
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


LOLO NAMAN, DI PO AKO SENIOR CITIZEN TULAD N'YO!



PARTICIPANTS in the First Human Celebrity Badminton Cup in Singapore: Gem Padilla, Bubbles Paraiso, Phoemela Baranda, Raya Mananquil, Rikki Lopez; (second row) Keren Pascual, Rajo Laurel, Zanjoe Marudo, Tonton Gutierrez, Francis Ricafort, Corey Wills, Carol Francisco, Mark Ang, Christopher Uy, Luke Jickain, Toni Abad, Yasmien Kurdi, Glydel Mercado, Luz Siguion-Reyna and Rina Aguilar



RAYA Mananquil and Corey Wills

Shuttled to Singapore

LORNA Tolentino

THERE'S a lot to be said about celebrity sports—both good and bad. And always surrounding the celebrities is a whole hoopla of media, adoring fans and curious onlookers that sometimes the sporting event becomes more of a celebrity circus.

Top alternative clothing brand Human decided to do away with all the fuss and focus instead on some quality time for celebrities getting together for some fun and a little friendly competition.

How did Human pull it off? By taking the celebrities to the badminton courts at the National Singapore University in—that's right—the Lion City of Singapore. Away from everyday pressures, the stellar players let their hair down and smashed shuttlecocks for the First Human Celebrity Badminton Cup.

Of course, it was all in the name of fun, but there were some serious prizes for the best players. Billboard hottie Luke Jickain and TV host Phoemela Baranda walked away with the prize for Division A, and Starstruck survivor Yasmien Kurdi and Rikki Lopez took home the bacon for Division B.

It can definitely be said that all these celebrities—who were all in black, incidentally—had a smashing good time.

BUBBLES Paraiso and Francis Ricafort

THE FIRST Celebrity Badminton Cup winners: Gem Padilla, Carol Francisco, Yasmien Kurdi, Rina Aguilar and Luz Siguion-Reyna; (back) Rajo Laurel and Keren Pascual

ZANJOE Marudo and Christopher Uy

PHOEMELA Baranda and Luke Jickain

PARTNERS in life, Glydel Mercado and Tonton Gutierrez

RAJO Laurel and Patrick Uy

ASHAMED OF YOUR DARK UNDER-ARMS?
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Take Charge Doc!

Dr. Nicky S. Montoya

Take Charge Doc! is your weekly question and answer guide on general health issues and illnesses. MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. And in a common thrust with the campaigns of the government, Take Charge Doc! parallels its features on the Calendar of Health Events of the Department of Health.

What are the kinds of burn injuries and what is the emergency management?

Burn injuries may be thermal, radiant or chemical in origin. Among these, thermal injuries are most common. In evaluating burn patients, two things are always considered: (1) the depth of the burn (2) the area (extent of injury) involved. In as far as the depth is concerned, burns can be classified into first, second, third and fourth degree injuries. 1st and 2nd degree burns are painful because the nerve endings are still intact. Also, 2nd degree injuries tend to form blisters as compared to 1st degree burns. Pain will be absent at the burn site for 3rd degree burns if all the area nerve endings are destroyed with pain in the surrounding tissue (which are less damaged). 4th degree burns will present with exposure of muscles and bone.

What is most important in the emergency management of any burn injury is still the basic ABC--Airway, Breathing and Circulation. It is also important to know the extent of the burn injury to determine whether a patient may be treated on an outpatient basis or must be confined in the hospital. The burn injury is managed and treated definitely with continuous washing, cleaning, administration of analgesic, anti-tetanus and all others, only after making sure that the patient is stable and is as comfortable as possible.

MEDICard accredited specialist at San Juan De Dios Hospital, **Dr. Ramon Burgos** provides us with this week's answer to our feature question on burn injuries. Dr. Burgos finished Medicine in 1985 at the University of Santo Tomas and took his residency for his specialization in Emergency Medicine at Makati Medical Center. He is affiliated with the Philippine Academy of Emergency Medicine and Acute Care, the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians and the American Academy of Physicians.

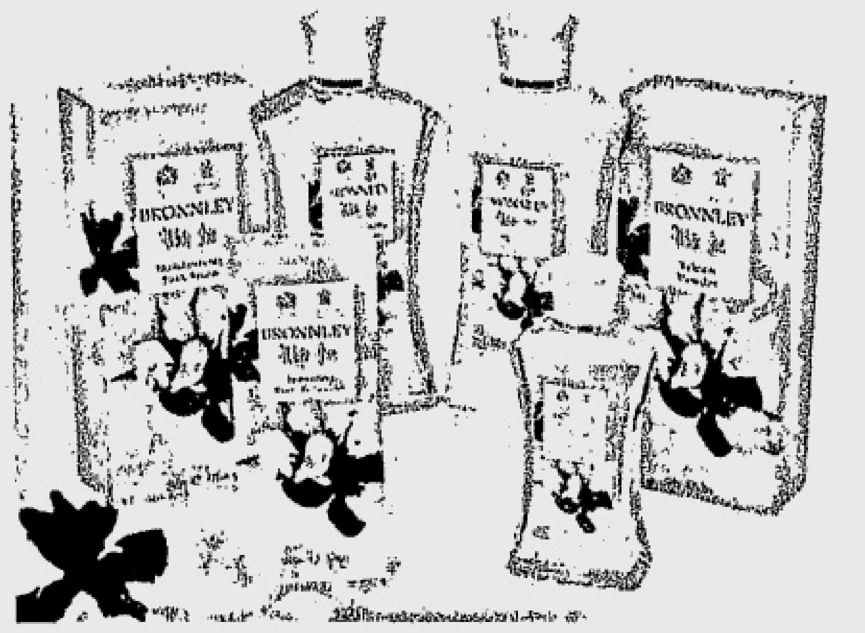
BE HEARD AND BE READ. Write to DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA (c/o *TAKE CHARGE DOC!*) or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for inquiries on health matters.

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC.: 9/F Sagittarius Bldg., H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 TRUNKLINE: 867-2020 FAX NO.: 894-5720, 810-3856 TEXT: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe and Touch Mobile) or to 4627 (Smart and Talk N' Text) INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY SALES: 818-2181 CORPORATE SALES: 848-6452 848-6456, 848-6451 E-MAIL: inquiry@medicardphils.com, feedback@medicardphils.com WEBSITE: www.medicardphils.com

MEDICard-INFONXX Signing

INFONXX PHILIPPINES, INC., the world's leader in directory assistance renews its corporate healthcare program with MEDICard. Present during the recently held contract signing were (seated L-R) MEDICard's EVP & GM, Luis Montoya and Pres., Dr. Nicanor Montoya with INFONXX HRD Dir., Emerlynn Joyce Tonson and Synergy Expertise Ins. Brokerage CEO, Ma. Carmen Javier. Also present were (standing L-R) Voltaire Victoria (MEDICard Mktg. & Sales Mngr.), Amy Garcia (Synergy Treasurer), INFONXX's Sherryl Lim-Fernandez (HR Mngr.) and Anna Celina Tobias (Benefits Coordinator) with Miguel Jardiel (MEDICard Asst. Sup.-Mktg. & Sales).

BRONNLEY for men



LUXURY bath products from the House of Bronnley include bath gel, moisturizing lotion, talcum powder and cologne in fresh floral scents

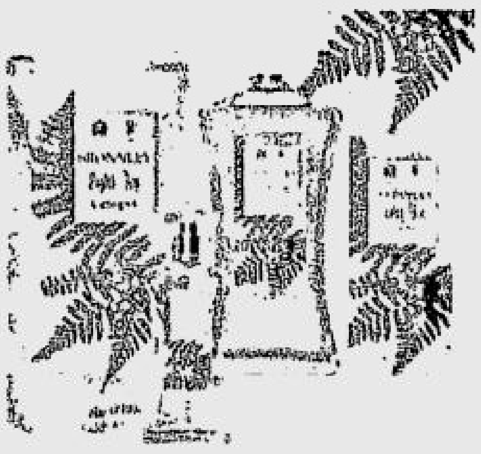
Little luxuries fit for royalty

ENJOY life's little luxuries from Bronnley like the sweet-scented Apricot and Almond Bath Gel or the soft and silky feel of English Fern Moisturizing Lotion.

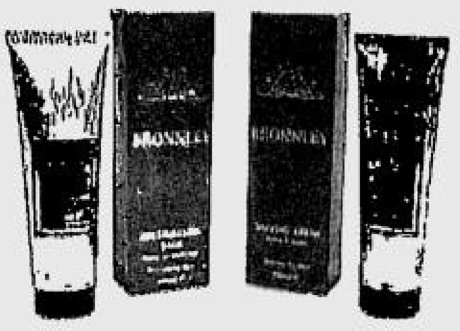
Bronnley has been a leading British manufacturer of fine soaps and toiletries for over 100 years. It created lifestyle products using traditional Old-World recipes and the best quality ingredients. Its products are used by both Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and her son, the Prince of Wales.

Bronnley is now best known for its fragrant, triple-milled soaps that are packaged in beautiful wooden boxes and decorative tins that also make attractive gifts.

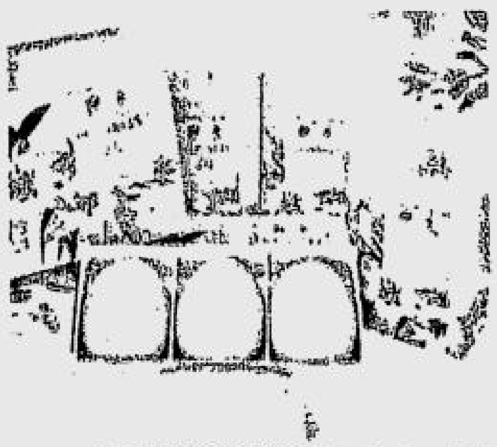
Aside from soaps, the Bronnley bath line also includes shower gels, bath oils, body lotion, hand and nail cream and cologne. An exclusive range for men includes shaving cream, after shave and soaps in a musky, masculine scent.



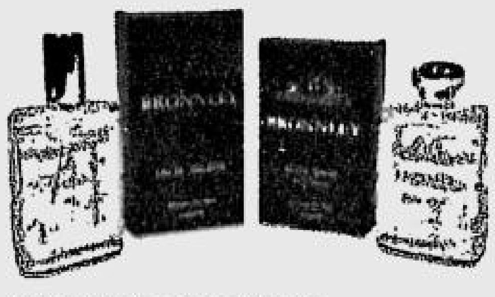
BRONNLEY English Fern Cologne



SHAVING line for men



LILY guest soaps



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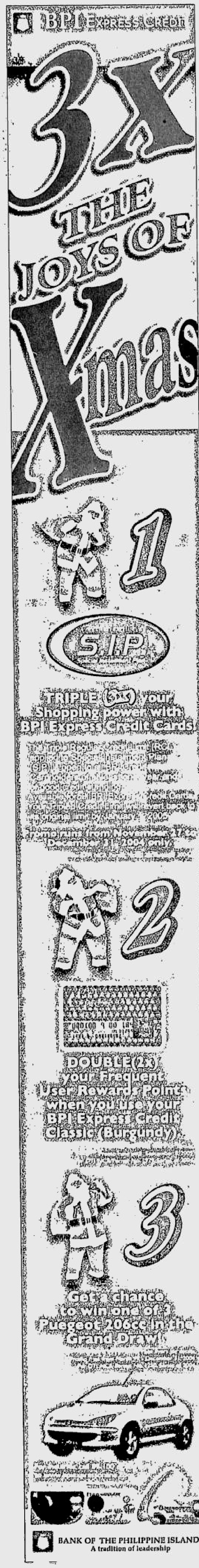

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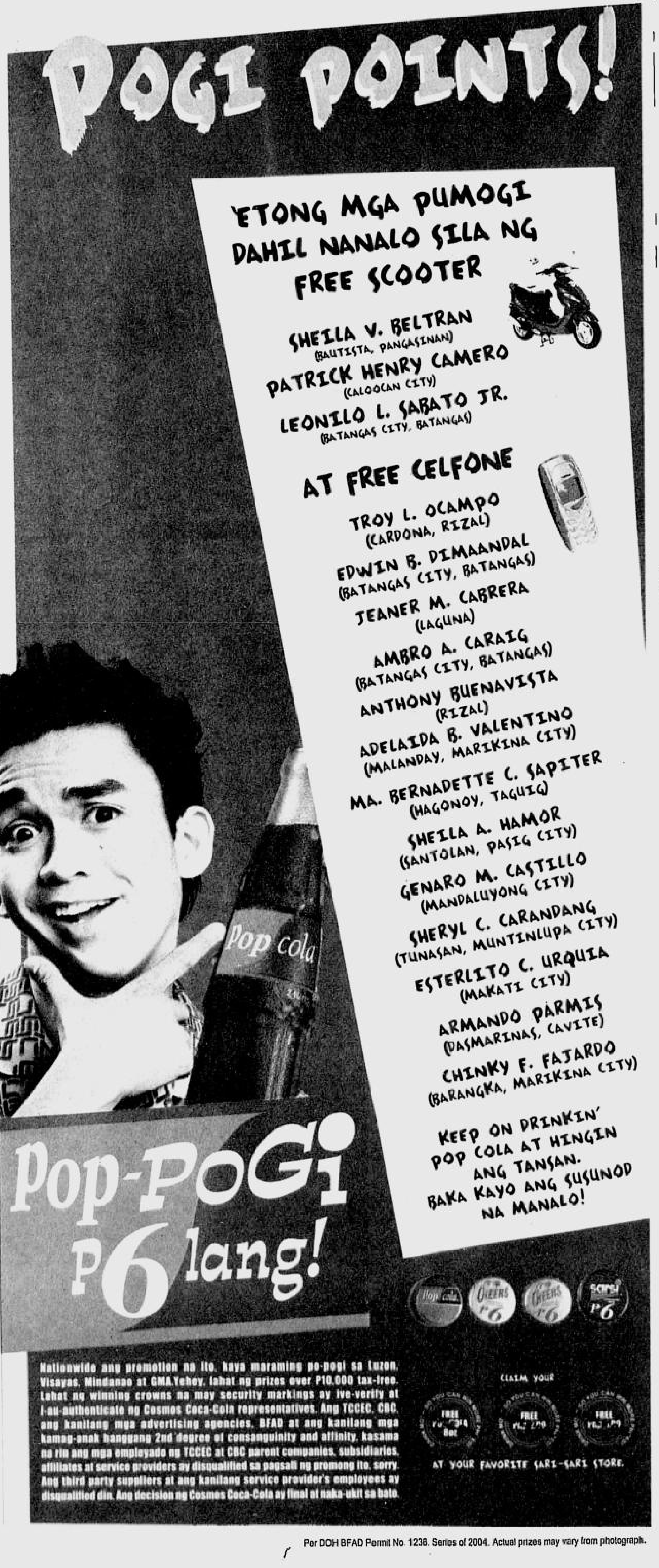

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Confessions of a 'closet' Vilmanian

By Boots Anson-Roa
Contributor

'She is the only actress I know who deserves to be called diva'

THE SPIRIT moves me, and my PC keyboard is touched—pun intended.

Besides, I am a closet Vilmanian.

Notice that the *de rigueur* "Honorable Mayor of Lipa" is missing. Irreverent? We in the film industry take pride that Vilma Santos has spread her wings, added a more significant dimension to her already multilayered life, and is now steeped in genuine public service, both as city mayor and spouse to Sen. Ralph Recto. But we maintain selfish pride and unabashedly claim that she was first honed as an actress, and consequently as a person, in this industry that we all love and remain grateful to.

I dare say that she is a good person and a good actress before she is a good mayor and public servant.

Vilma's now rare film and television presence is highlighted by her stellar participation in MAQ Film's Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry, "Mano Po 3," along with Christopher de Leon, Jay Manalo, the formidable Eddie Garcia, Sheryl Cruz, Karylle, Angelica Panganiban, Angel Locsin, John Pratts, Carlo Aquino, Paolo Contis, Dennis Trillo, Amy Austria, Jean Garcia, Allan Paule and myself. The last of the "Mano Po" series, it is written by Roi Iglesias and directed by Joel Lamangan. The big-budget epic features an unusual love triangle set against the Filipino-Chinese subculture and spanning 45 years in China and the Philippines.

Vilma, Christopher and Jay play inseparable childhood friends. Vilma's true love is Christopher, but by some twist of fate, he leaves the country and she marries Jay. She and Christopher accidentally cross paths again after a long time. The conflict unfolds, exacerbated mostly by stringent Chinoy tradition, values and mores. How this is remarkably resolved in *direk* Joel Lamangan's adroit hands will be revealed when the MMFF reels off on Dec. 25, after a mammoth parade in Manila on Christmas Eve.

A privilege

In the role of Jay's mother and Vilma's tradition-bound mother-in-law, I was privileged to shoot many sequences with her. In 1973, the two of us tied for the Famas Best Actress award, a first in Philippine movie history. As an avid observer and "mainstreamer" in this industry that has been kind to me, I have witnessed Vilma's metamorphosis from the mawkish "Trudis Liit" to the "patweetums" and saccharine Ate Vi, Edgar "Bobot" Mortiz's *ka*-love team versus Guy and Pip in the '70s, to "Burlesk Queen." This last one launched the reinvention of her career and discovery of her finer thespic talents under the tutelage of directors Eddie Garcia, Celso Ad Castillo, Mike de Leon, Lino Brocka, Chito Roño and Ishmael Bernal. To her Galatea, she considers Bernal the Pygmalion.

Forty-four years into a sterling career, Vilma has scored numerous successes not only at the box office but, more importantly, through vast and uncontested recognition as one of the country's most important actresses. In a recent function in Beijing while we were filming, filmed for this movie, she was introduced as the "Meryl Streep of the Philippines." We believe she is most truly deserving of the title "acting diva," oft arbitrarily bestowed on drama queen wannabes.

THE AUTHOR, second from left, with the cast of "Mano Po 3"—Jay Manalo, Vilma Santos, Eddie Garcia, and Christopher de Leon

Vilma portrayed my daughter in an early '70s Tagalog-Ilang-Ilang teenage fare aptly titled "The Wonderful World of Music," which also starred Bobot. Everyone, including those who had no right to sing and dance—myself included—sang and danced in that movie.

Predictably, it became a box-office hit. Nevertheless, and thankfully, the movie failed to launch Vilma's or my own singing career.

The 'faucet'

We called Vilma "gripo" (faucet) at the time, because she could shed buckets of tears on the director's cue and at the sound of the clapper. Thirty years later, on the set of "Mano Po 3," we still tagged her "gripo," but with a marked difference: every tear drop is internalized, motivated and textured by her commitment to truthful characterization and scene execution, while never unmindful of ensemble acting.

This time, the tears are neither superfluous nor perfunctory. They are layered differently; spawned by a vast gamut of emotions—anger, pain, frustration, helplessness, yearning; even joy and bliss. See how she conveys these subtly, exquisitely and most affectingly across the screen, with or without tears.

BOOTS Anson-Roa and Vilma Santos on location for their latest movie

Vilma makes no claim to any formal training in acting. Similarly, she attributes her now widely acknowledged efficacy as a public official not to any initials (MA, MBA, or PhD) after her name, but again to Truth and Character, a willingness to learn, to share, to listen and empathize. The last two I gleaned as we sat together en route to Beijing. While she would recount with passion her multifarious experiences when asked to, Vilma likewise passed in the active listening department with flying colors. It must be this genuine and unqualified interest in people—from producer to director to co-stars to production staff and crew—that makes her so endearing and which, in turn, provides her with a personal repository of nuances that lace her character interpretations.

Truth and character—two basic tenets of every actor worth his salt. Vilma has stretched their limits beyond her persona and celebrity to the other seasons of her life: marriage, motherhood and public service. We join the multitude who exult over her deserved success in transcending those seasons.

'Kuya' lessons

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

Rommel Montano doesn't seem to be cut out for show biz. He's unusually quiet, even in the company of his famous big brother, Cesar

HE WAS one of the rapists in the controversial Toto Natividad film, "Animal." He was either sidekick or villain in some Ronnie Rickets and Victor Neri action films. But mostly, he figured in most of the films identified with his actor-brother, Cesar Montano.

Showing up at the presscon of his brother's latest film, "Panaghoy sa Suba (Call of the River)," where he plays a guerilla, Rommel Montano doesn't seem cut out for show biz. He doesn't like socializing, he is unusually quiet even in the company of his famous brother and he prefers to work behind the scenes.

A fellow Visayan actor, Caridad Sanches, fondly refers to him as "*tahimik pero walanghiya* (quiet but mischievous)."

Working together in the Toto Natividad film based on the celebrated rape case in Cebu (she played the mother of the influential rapist played by John Regala), Sanchez instantly liked Rommel. "He is so low key you would not think he is the brother of Cesar," she says. But what I like is that he has his own personality and he is quite frank and honest. That he is also good-looking is a plus."

Prayerful

A father of three, the real Rommel belies his gangster image on film. His reading fare includes the Bible and books on taxation. And he prays.

"I pray all the time. I even pray so that I can do a rape scene well," he says. "I have to give my best specially when I am appearing in my brother's film because he is such a perfectionist."

They are actually very close. The youngest in a brood of seven, Rommel was actually brought up by Cesar. "We play basketball together, we know each other's secrets, we are both into health food and stuff. And if anyone crosses him, he becomes my enemy, too."

However, Cesar had little to do with Rommel's start in show biz. He was given a break in a TV show called "Super Laugh-In," then debuted in some teenybopper films, the first of which was "Kolehiyala."

In his brother's first Hollywood movie, "The Great Raid," Rommel also passed the rigid audition and got the role of one of the guerillas working with a lady American doctor played by Connie Neilsen who appeared in "The Gladiator."

He auditioned three times in Australia, Los Angeles and then China, where most of his scenes were shot. "I didn't expect to make it because so many tried out. But they liked my looks and after my third audition in China where most of his scenes were shot, they decided I fit the role."

Hollywood culture

It was while working in "The Great Raid" that Rommel had a taste of Hollywood professionalism. He relates: "When they say they will fetch you at four in the morning, you had better be ready before that because someone will be knocking on your door at 3:55 a.m."

When he finally saw the film, his reaction was unusual. "*Tanghalang kinilabutan ako* (I got goosebumps)," he admits. "Cesar will tell you that I am a constant critic of films specially those involving me and my brother. When I saw 'The Great Raid,' I got so carried away, I thanked the Lord I was part of the project."

While in Hollywood, Rommel was surprised to find out that his favorite actress, Gina Alajar, was specially liked by one American screenwriter. "He told me that after watching an old film starring Gina, he thought the Filipina actress was even better than Meryl Streep."

Rommel has yet to meet Gina Alajar even in person.

It was while they were in Hollywood that Rommel realized that foreign films making it in the American market are those reflecting their own cultures—not Hollywood copycats.

Birth of 'Panaghoy'

On one of those foreign trips, the brothers thought about doing something together straight from their home province. That was the birth of "Panaghoy," a story of village life by the river before, during and after the war." Cesar directed it himself.

Rommel brainstormed with screenwriter Cris Vertido. "I suggested that the film should have a deeper story, and that it has to be different from what Cesar used to do."

Later, when he saw the entirety of "Panaghoy," Rommel was elated. "We finally did a film that was true to our expectations. We expect it to bring back the glory of the Visayan film and raise the consciousness and respect for things Visayan."

Best of all for Rommel, his performance in the movie reflects all that his big brother has taught him as an actor: "Don't act the part. Be that person. Don't be OA. Be natural."

ROMMEL Montano: My big brother taught me to never 'act.'

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'Theater is magic'

The daughter of Laurice and Johnny finds her calling

"MY PARENTS have been very supportive," says Irina Feleo, who has just decided to act in theater.

The parents are veteran actor Johnny Delgado and director Laurice Guillen, both highly respected pillars of the movie industry.

"They're just glad that they didn't have to push me and my sister Ana to this craft," according to Ina. In fact, the siblings were led ever so gently—witnessing acting workshops in their own home.

Ina plays a rooster, Tandang, and one of the *bellas*, or cabaret dancers, in "Lam-Ang," Tanghalang Ateneo's third production for its 26th season.

Dancer, ice skater

A junior college student at the Ateneo de Manila University taking up Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, she has also been a member of the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company for two and a half years.

"I enjoy dancing with all my heart," Ina says. "I love expressing myself through movement." Which explains why she is also an avid ice skater. Bayanihan was simply a logical conclusion.

She was first seen in the multi-awarded film, "Tanging Yaman," under the direction of her mom. Her dad also starred in that film. She played the role of a skater who fascinated Jericho Rosales' character. She also appeared in a GMA 7 soap opera for a year. It was not easy to juggle that with schooling, she admits. But, the call of the theater was strong.

"Lam-Ang" is based on a famous Ilocano epic. Ina's role maximizes her acting and dancing talents. She says "Tandang" is the more challenging character because she has to move like a rooster, whereas her Bella is just "*makulit* [irrepressible] and sexy."

It's magic

She is a different person on stage. "There's something magical about theatre," she gushes. "The rehearsals, the lights, the stage… It's not a job; it's something you do out of passion, and it gives you so much in return."

Needless to say, Ina is proud to be part of "Lam-Ang."

"So much love went into this production. Everyone should see this because it is sure to make them happy."

Remaining "Lam-ang" playdates are tonight till Dec. 18, 7 p.m., with an additional 2 p.m. show on the 18th, at the Rizal Mini-Theater, Ateneo de Manila University. For inquiries, call Ian Cuizon, (0917) 205-5943, or the Rizal Mini-Theater, 426-6001 loc. 5121.

INA: I love expressing myself through movement.

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Movie set in flames

TUCSON, Arizona—Firefighters who rushed to battle a huge blaze that erupted on the set of a Hollywood movie on Friday had to contend with rattlesnakes along with the flames when they arrived on the scene.

Fire officials said they were warned by the film crew that a cast of live rattlesnakes was loose on the set when the fire broke out, forcing the evacuation of more than 2,000 people from a convention center in the western US state of Arizona.

The inferno that started Friday night during the filming of a scene for a television movie called "Desperation," based on a novel by the author Stephen King, caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.

Toast

"The set itself is completely toast," said Deputy Chief Randy Ogden of the Tucson Fire Department.

"There were many very expensive cameras, computers and props that were completely destroyed," he said of the fire that destroyed hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of moviemaking equipment.

Earlier local media reports quoted fire officials as saying the blaze was caused by a pyrotechnic movie stunt that went disastrously wrong, but Ogden said it began in a mining-shaft set made of a Styrofoam-type material. *AFP*

It ain't over for Catherine

ZETA-JONES

LONDON—The legal battle by Hollywood power couple Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas over Hello magazine's use of unauthorized photographs of their wedding returns to court on Monday. Hello! is appealing against a finding that it invaded the couple's privacy by using the photographs and against the one million pound ($1.92 million) damages awarded to the couple and rival magazine OK! which had an exclusive deal to carry the wedding pictures.

Bianca Jagger's Alternative Nobel

STOCKHOLM—Bianca Jagger of Nicaragua was awarded an honor known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize' on Thursday for her work to promote human rights and social justice. Jagger, who first became famous for her eight-year marriage to rock star Mick Jagger, shares the 2004 Right Livelihood Award with two others. *Reuters*

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3	NATIONAL TREASURE 11:10, 1:55, 4:40 7:25, 10:30 GP
4	2046 12:00, 2:40, 5:20 8:00, 10:40 R-13

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ALEXANDER R13 12:30,3:40,6:50,10:00	NATIONAL TREASURE GP 12:10,2:40,5:10,7:40,10:10	BRIDGET JONES PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:15
THE INCREDIBLES GP 12:10 2:40 5:10 ONE MISSED CALL R13 7:40,10:00	POLAR EXPRESS GP 11:45,1:55,4:05 2046 R13 7:20,9:50	NED KELLY PG13 12:40,3:05,5:30,7:55,10:20

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- 5 Salat sa Ligaya

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CINEMA 2	BIRTH 11:35, 1:55, 4:15, 6:35, 8:55 P13

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① POLAR EXPRESS (GP)
FS 10:45AM, 3:15PM, LMF 7:45PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (GP)
FS 1:00PM, 5:30PM, LMF 10:00PM

② BRIDGET JONES (EDGE OF REASON)
FS 11:45AM, 2:15PM, 4:45PM, 7:15PM, LMF 9:45PM (PG-13)

③ GEORGE & THE DRAGON
FS 11:35AM, 2:00PM, 4:25PM, 6:50PM LMF 9:15PM (GP)

④ 2046
FS 10:50AM, 1:30PM, 4:10PM, 6:50PM, LMF 9:30PM (R-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE — NATIONAL TREASURE (GP)
FS 11:20AM,2PM,4:40PM,7:20PM,LMF 10:00PM

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	POLAR EXPRESS 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
2	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	NATIONAL TREASURE 12:30 3:15 6:00 8:50
3	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	ALEXANDER 12:20 3:30 6:40 9:50
4	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	BRIDGET JONES 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
5	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	CINEMAS 5,6,7,8,9 & 10 Opening very soon!
6	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	
7	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	
8	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	
9	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	
10	DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX	

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ENTERTAINMENT

ALI MALL CINEMAS

3	Dolby	ALEXANDER 11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
4	SDDS	BRIDGET JONES 11:40 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00
5	dts	ONE MISSED CALL 11:30 1:50 4:10 6:30 8:55
6	Dolby	PA SIYAM 11:30 1:50 4:10 6:30 8:55
7	Dolby	BCUZ OF U 11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20

ARANETA COLISEUM

Dec. 15	FEDEX vs. SLR	
Dec. 25	DISNEY ON ICE	1pm/4:30pm/8pm
Dec. 26	DISNEY ON ICE	2pm/6pm
Dec. 27	DISNEY ON ICE	2pm/6pm
Dec. 28	DISNEY ON ICE	6pm
Dec. 29	DISNEY ON ICE	2pm/6pm

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 ALEXANDER • THX 11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00	6 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
2 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:30 12:40 2:50 2046 4:50 7:25 10:00	7 TWO BROTHERS 12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	8 PA-SIYAM 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 NED KELLY 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	9 THE INCREDIBLES 10:20 12:45 3:10 ONE MISSED CALL 5:20 7:40 10:00
5 BIRTH 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	10 BRIDGET JONES 2 12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 9:50	
2 THE INCREDIBLES 10:40 1:10 3:40 ONE MISSED CALL 6:10 8:15 10:00	5 RESERVE
3 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:35 12:00 3:05 2046 5:20 7:40 10:00	6 NED KELLY 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:15 10:00
4 PA-SIYAM 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50	7 BIRTH 10:15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:25 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 BCUZ OF U 10:20 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10	5 BIRTH 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
2 ALEXANDER 10:55 2:20 5:45 9:10	6 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:55 1:50 4:45 7:40 10:30
3 BRIDGET JONES 2 10:55 1:25 3:55 6:25 9:00	7 ONE MISSED CALL 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40 10:30
4 SEED OF CHUCKY 10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00	8 PA-SIYAM 11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 ALEXANDER 10:40 1:50 5:00 8:15	5 BCUZ OF U 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30	6 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:45 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20
3 HELLWOLF 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55	7 SEED OF CHUCKY 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
4 SYLVIA 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55	8 THE INCREDIBLES 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30

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PIONEER 687-5378

1 ALEXANDER 10:40 2:00 5:20 8:50	3 NATIONAL TREASURE 12:05 2:55 5:45 8:45
2 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 10:45 1:10 3:35 6:00 8:25	4 NED KELLY 11:30 1:50 4:10 6:30 8:50

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985 / 2575

1 SAW 11:45 1:45 4:05 6:15 8:30	3 BCUZ OF U 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
2 SEED OF CHUCKY 11:45 1:45 4:05 6:15 8:30	4 NAKAW NA SANDALI 11:45 1:45 4:05 6:15 8:30

CAINTA 240-4661

1 ALEXANDER 12:00 2:55 5:50 8:45	3 PA-SIYAM 10:10 12:50 3:30 6:10 8:50
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:35 1:20 4:45 8:45	4 SEED OF CHUCKY 11:00 1:20 3:45 6:00 8:20

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THREE GENERATIONS. Sharon, Miel and Elaine

By Bayani S. San Diego,
Contributor

How has your life changed since Mariel?

So much! I have been breastfeeding since she was born, so I am really so tied down to her schedule that I can't do much else. I love it, but there is a part of me that misses some of the things I used to be able to do freely. I can't even go on a real diet because I have to be giving her healthy milk.

Has your shoe size changed?

My feet have grown bigger by half an inch.

Sleeping habits?

My baby feeds every three hours or so. Even even in the middle of the night, I have to get up.

Eating habits?

When I was pregnant, I didn't like sweets. I didn't eat much rice, either, and my cravings were weird. After delivery, I craved sweets again. Now it has tapered off again.

Does Senator Kiko change diapers?

No, but he plays with her in the morning, before going to work. With Frankie, he learned to change diapers when she was a little bigger. Over all, one of things I think my husband is great at is being a father.

Have you noticed anything distinctive about Miel?

She makes these sounds ... sometimes you'd think she's angry. She seems to be impatient. Sometimes we call her "Miel *ora-mismo*"! She also cries louder than either of her big sisters did.

How has Frankie taken to her?

Frankie is sooooo loving toward Miel. When she comes into our room, she always asks first, "Where's my baby, Mama?" She sings to her, and asks when Miel could sleep beside her.

Do you think the baby looks like you?

Sometimes I look at her and laugh. It's like looking at my baby pictures.

What new things have you learned as a mother? As a woman?

I heard somewhere before that mothering, or parenting in general, becomes easier with each child. I believe in a way that's true. *Parang* you improve with each child. I'd like to have another one, but I don't think I can do that right away. I'm not getting any younger. I wish I could have had a whole "litter" earlier on, maybe four or six!

When are you coming back to work?

Soon, I hope. I am a woman who loves to work, [but] still have a lot of weight to lose.

'Sideways' is LA critics' pick

PAUL GIAMATTI (left) and Thomas Haden Church in "Sideways"

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles Film Critics Association on Saturday named "Sideways," about two men searching for love in California's wine country, as the year's best film, and Clint Eastwood's female boxing movie "Million Dollar Baby" as the runner-up.

The picks come two days ahead of nominations for the widely watched Golden Globe Awards, which are given by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and help narrow the list of films competing for the top film awards in the United States, the Oscars, in February.

"Sideways" earned the No. 1 spot in four other categories, including best director for Alexander Payne, screenplay for Payne and Jim Taylor, supporting actress for Virginia Madsen and supporting actor for Thomas Haden Church.

Britain's Imelda Staunton was named best actress for her portrayal as an abortionist in "Vera Drake," and Irish actor Liam Neeson was handed the best actor honor for playing US sex researcher Dr. Alfred Kinsey in "Kinsey."

Honors from critics and movie writers such as those in the Los Angeles group often indicate the year's top films, and are closely watched by voters at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which awards the Oscars.

Earlier this month, another US group, the National Board of Review, named "Finding Neverland," a fictional film about "Peter Pan" author J.M. Barrie, as 2004's top movie and Howard Hughes drama "The Aviator" as the No. 2 pick. Also included in its top 10 films were "Sideways" and "Million Dollar Baby."

Runners-up

The LA critics picked "Sideways" star Paul Giamatti, who portrays a man as in love with a good glass of wine as he still is with his ex-wife, as runner-up for best actor. Julie Delpy in drama "Before Sunset" was the No. 2 actress behind Staunton.

Supporting actress and actor runners-up, respectively, were Cate Blanchett for two movies, "The Aviator" and "Coffee and Cigarettes," and Morgan Freeman for "Million Dollar Baby."

Martin Scorsese was behind Payne for directing Howard Hughes drama, "The Aviator," and Charlie Kaufman was in the No. 2 spot to Payne and Taylor for his screenplay of "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."

Martial arts film "House of Flying Daggers" was named best foreign language film by the Los Angeles critics, and "The Motorcycle Diaries," about the early life of revolutionary Che Guevara, was the runner-up.

Other notable winners included director Brad Bird for animation for box-office smash "The Incredibles. National Board of Review pick "Born into Brothels" edged out director Michael Moore's controversial "Fahrenheit 9/11" to be the Los Angeles critics' best documentary.

The Los Angeles Film Critics Association will honor the winners of their 30th annual awards at a dinner on Jan. 13. *Reuters*

American movies' greatest music

THE AMERICAN Film Institute's (AFI) seventh polling, "100 Years ... 100 Songs" highlighted "America's Greatest Music in the Movies," as chosen by leaders of the entertainment community, in a three-hour television event, that aired on the CBS Television Network earlier this year.

A ballot was distributed in 2003 with 400 nominated films and songs to a jury of 1,500 leaders from the film community, including film artists (directors, screenwriters, actors, editors, composers, cinematographers, etc.) critics and historians.

Only songs from feature-length American films released before Jan. 1, 2003 were considered. Voters could submit up to five write-in choices not included among the 400 nominees.

Here are the first 50:

1. "Over the Rainbow"—The Wizard of Oz (1939)
2. "As Time Goes By"—Casablanca (1942)
3 "Singin' in the Rain"—Singin' in the Rain (1952)
4. "Moon River"—Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961)
5. "White Christmas"—Holiday Inn (1942)
6. "Mrs. Robinson"—The Graduate (1967)
7. "When You Wish Upon a Star"—Pinocchio (1940)
8. "The Way We Were"—The Way We Were (1973)
9. "Stayin' Alive" —Saturday Night Fever (1977)
10. "The Sound of Music"—The Sound of Music (1965)
11. "The Man that Got Away"—A Star is Born (1954)
12. "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend"— Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)
13. "People"—Funny Girl (1968)
14. "My Heart Will Go On"—Titanic (1997)
15. "Cheek to Cheek"—Top Hat (1935)
16. "Evergreen (Love Theme From A Star is Born)"—A Star is Born (1976)
17. "I Could Have Danced All Night"—My Fair Lady (1964)
18. "Cabaret"—Cabaret (1972)
19. "Some Day My Prince Will Come"—Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
20. "Somewhere"—West Side Story (1961)
21. "Jailhouse Rock"—Jailhouse Rock (1957)
22. "Everybody's Talkin'"—Midnight Cowboy (1969)
23. "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head"—Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)
24. "Ol' Man River"—Show Boat (1936)
25. "High Noon (Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darlin)"—High Noon (1952)
26. "The Trolley Song"—Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)
27. "Unchained Melody"—Ghost (1990)
28. "Some Enchanted Evening"—South Pacific (1958)
29. "Born To Be Wild"—Easy Rider (1969)
30. "Stormy Weather"—Stormy Weather (1943)
31. "Theme from New York, New York"—New York, New York (1977)
32. "I Got Rhythm"—An American in Paris (1951)
33. "Aquarius"—Hair (1979)
34. "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off"—Shall We Dance (1937)
35. "America"—West Side Story (1961)
36. "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"—Mary Poppins (1964)
37. "Swinging on a Star"—Going My Way (1944)
38. "Theme from Shaft"—Shaft (1971)
39. "Days of Wine and Roses"—Days Of Wine And Roses (1963)
40. "Fight The Power"—Do The Right Thing (1989)
41. "New York, New York"—On The Town (1949)
42. "Luck Be a Lady"—Guys And Dolls (1955)
43. "The Way You Look Tonight"—Swing Time (1936)
44. "Wind Beneath My Wings"—Beaches (1988)
45. "That's Entertainment"—The Band Wagon (1953)
46. "Don't Rain on My Parade"—Funny Girl (1968)
47. "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah"—Song Of The South (1947)
48. "Whatever Will Be, Will Be (Que Sera, Sera)"—The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956)
49. "Make 'Em Laugh" —Singin' in the Rain (1952)
50. "Rock Around the Clock"—Blackboard Jungle (1955)

KELLY O'CONNOR REYNOLDS
SINGIN' IN THE RAIN

BOGART BERGMAN HENREID
CASABLANCA